

THE
Plain Mans Path-way
Robert TO *Stonehouse*
HEAVEN.

his WHEREIN *book*
Every Man may clearly see whether
he shall be saved or damned.
Set forth Dialogue-wise: for
the better understanding of the
simple.

By *Arthur Dent*, Preacher of
the Word of God at *South-Sho-*
berry in Essex.

Corrected and much amended; with
a Table of all the principal matters; and
three Prayers, necessary to be used in
private Families, hereunto added by the
same Author.

Zephaniah. 3. 5.

*Every morning the Lord bringeth his judgement
to light, he faileth not. : but the wicked will
not learn to be ashamed.*

L O N D O N :

Printed for *M. Watton* and *G. Conyers*, at the
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Ring on *Ludgate-Hill*, over against the
Old Bayly, 1684.



To the Right Worshipful, Sir Julius Caesar
Knight, one of the Masters of the Request
to the Kings Majesty, Judge of the High
Court of Admiralty, and Master of St.
Katherines: A.D. wisheth all good things
in Christ Jesus.

HAVING finished (Right Worshipful) and
made ready for the Press this Dialogue,
I bethought me (sith the common manner of all
that write any Books in this age, is to dedicate
the same to one or other of great place) to whom
I might dedicate these my poor Labours. At
last, I did resolve with my self, none to be more
fit than your Worship, both in regard of some
affinity in the flesh, as also because of those ma-
nifold good parts, wherewith the Almighty hath
endued you. Having therefore none other thing
to present your Worship withal (in token of a
thankful heart for your courtesies shewed to-
ward me) behold I do here send unto you this
third fruit of my labour published: most humbly
beseeching you to take it in good worth: not
weighing the value of the thing, (which is of no
value) but the simple and good mind and mean-
ing of the giver.

This work doth sharply reprove and evict the
world of sin, and therefore is like to find many
deadly enemies, which with cruel hatred will
most eagerly pursue it unto death. Zoilus also
and his fellows, I know, will bitterly carp at

The Epistle Dedicatory.

it: therefore it flyeth unto your worship, for protection, and humbly desireth to take sanctuary under your wings. Wherefore I humbly intreat you to take upon you the Patronage and Defence of it, that by your means it may be delivered both from the calumnious Obloquies of evil disposed persons, and also from the worlds malignity, so as it may take no injury. And concerning this little volume, the sum of the matter of it, you shall find in the Epistle to the Reader. As concerning the manner, here is no great matter of Learning, Wit, Art, Eloquence, or Ingenious Inventions, (for I have herein specially respected the ignorant and vulgar sort, whose edification I do chiefly aim at;) yet somewhat there is which may concern the learned, and give them some contentment. Whatsoever it be, I leave it with your Worship, beseeching you to give it entertainment. And so I do most humbly take my leave, commending both your self, your good wife, and your whole family, to the merciful protection of the ever living God.

From South-Shoobery in Essex.

April 10. An. Dom. 1601.

Your Worships to command
in the Lord,

ARTHUR DENT.

The

The Epistle to the Reader.

G Entle Reader, seeing my little Sermon of Repen-
tance, some few years since published, hath been
so well accepted of; I have for thy further good,
published this Dialogue; being the third fruit of my
labour; wishing it the like success, that God thereby
may have the glory, and thou, who art the Reader,
comfort. I have in one part of this Dialogue, pro-
duced some of the antient Writers, and some of the
wise Heathen also, to testifie upon their Oath in their
own language, and to bear witness of the ugliness of
some Vices, which we in this age might make light of;
which I wish may not be offensive to any. In other
parts of this work I do in a manner relinquish them.
But in this case I have in my weak judgment thought
them to be of some good use, to shew forth thus much,
That if we do not in time repent, forsake our sins, and
seek after God, both the Antient Christian Fathers
(whose eyes saw not that we see, nor their ears heard
what we hear) yea, the very Heathen also shall rise up
in judgement against us. Let none therefore stumble
at it. But if any man do, let him remember, I am in
a Dialogue, not in a Sermon I write to all of all sorts; I
speak not of some few of one sort. But that which is
done herein, is not much more than that of the Apo-
stle, (*as some of your own Poets have said, Act. 5. 17.*)
which is warrantable. One thing dear Christian I pray
thee, let me beg of thee; to wit, that thou wouldst
not read two or three leaves of this Book, and so cast
it from thee; but that thou wouldst read it throughout
even to the end: For I do assure thee if there be any
thing in it worth the reading, it is bestowed in the lat-
ter part thereof, and most of all towards the conclusi-
on. Be not discouraged therefore at the harshness
of the beginning, but look for smoother matter in the
midst, and most smooth in the perclose and winding

The Epistle to the Reader.

of all. For this Dialogue hath in it, not the nature of a Tragedy, which is begun with joy, and ended with sorrow; but a Comedy, which is begun with sorrow, and ended with joy. This Book meddleth not at all with any controversies in the Church, or any thing in the state Ecclesiastical, but onely entreth into a Controversie with Satan and Sin. The Authour of all blessing give a blessing unto it. The God of peace, which brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the blood of the everlasting Covenant, make us perfect in all good works, sanctifie us throughout, amend all our imperfections, and keep us blameless until the day of his most glorious appearing. Amen.

Thine in the Lord, A.D.

The Contents of this Dialogue.

First, it sheweth mans misery by nature, with the means of recovery.

Secondly, it sharply inveigheth against the iniquity of the time, and common corruptions of the world.

Thirdly, it sheweth the marks of the children of God, and of the reprobates; with the apparent signs of salvation and damnation,

Fourthly, it declareth how hard a thing it is to enter into life, and how few shall enter.

Fifthly, it layeth on the ignorance of the world, with the objections of the same.

Last of all, it publisheth and proclaimeth the sweet promises of the Gospel, with the abundant mercies of God to all that repent, believe, and turn truly unto him.

The

The Plain Man's Path-way to Heaven.

Interlocutors. { *Theologus*, a Divine.
Philagathus, an honest man.
Asunetus, an ignorant Man.
Antilegon, a Caviller.

Phil. **W**ELL met, good Mr. Theologus.

Theol. VVhat, mine old friend *Philagathus* ! I am glad to see you in good health.

Phil. Are you walking, Sir, here all alone in this pleasant meadow ?

Theol. Yea, for that I take some pleasure at this time of the year, to walk abroad in the fields for my recreation, both to take the fresh air, and to hear the sweet singing of birds.

Phil. Indeed, Sir, it is very comfortable, especially now in this pleasant moneth of May, and thanks be to God, hither we have had a very forward Spring, and as kindly a season as came this seven year.

Theol. God doth abound towards us in mercies : O that we could abound towards him in thanksgiving !

Phil. I pray you Sir, what a clock hold you it ?

Theol. I take it to be a little past One ; for I came but even now from dinner.

Phil. But behold, yonder come two men towards us ; what be they, I pray you ?

Theol. They be a couple of neighbours of the next Parish : the one of them is called *Asunetus*, who in every deed is a very ignorant man in Gods matters, and the other is called *Antilegon*, a notable Atheist, and caviller against all goodness.

Phil. If they be such, it were good for us to take some occasion to speak of matters of Religion : it may be we shall do them some good.

The Plain Man's

Theol. You have made a good motion; I like It well therefore if you will minister some matter, and move some questions, I will be ready to answer in the best sort I can.

Phil. But stay, Sir, lo here they come upon us.

Theol. Welcome, good neighbours, welcome. How do you, *Asunetus*, and you *Antilegon*?

Asun. Well God be thanked: and we are glad to see your Mastership in good health.

Theol. What make both of you here at this time of the day? There is some occasion, I am sure, draweth you this way.

Asun. Indeed, sir, we have some little business; for we came to talk with one of your Parish about a Cow we should buy of him.

Theol. Hath my neighbour a Cow to sell?

Antil. We are told he hath a very good one to sell; but I am afraid at this time of the year we shall find dear ware of her.

Theol. How dear? What do you think a very good Cow may be worth?

Antil. A good Cow indeed at this time of the year is worth very near four pound, which is a great price.

Theol. It is a very great price indeed.

Phil. I pray you, Mr. Theologus, leave off this talking of Kine, and worldly matters, and let us enter into speech of matters of Religion, whereby we may do good, and take good of one another.

Theol. You say well. But it may be these mens business requires haste, so as they cannot stay.

Asun. No, Sir, we are in no great haste; we can stay two or three hours, for the dayes are long: if we dispatch our business by night, it will serve our turn well enough.

Theol. Then if it will please you to walk to yonder Oak tree, there is a goodly Arbour, and handsom seats where we may all sit in the shadow, and confer of heavenly matters.

Asun. With good will, sir,

Phil. Come then, let us go.

Asun.

Asun. This is a goodly Arbour indeed, and here be handfom seats.

Theol. Sit you all down, I pray you. Now, friend Philagathus if you have any questions to move of matters of Religion, we are all ready to hear you.

Phil. It may be these men are somewhat ignorant of the very principles of Religion, and therefore I think it not amiss to begin there, and so to make way for further matters

Theol. I pray do so then.

Phil. First then, I demand of you in what state all men are born by nature.

Theol. In the state of condemnation; as appears, Eph. 2. 3. We are by nature the children of wrath as well as others. And again, it is written, Behold, I was born in iniquity, and in sin hath my mother conceived me. Ps. 51. 5.

Phil. Is it every mans case? Are not Dukes and Nobles Lords, and Ladies, and the great Potentates of the earth exempted from it?

Theol. No surely: it is the common case of all, both high and low, rich and poor; as it is written, What is man, that he should be clean; and he that is born of a woman that he should be just?

Phil. From whence cometh it, that all men are born in so woful case?

Theol. From the fall of Adam, who whereby hath not only wrapt himself; but all his posterity in extreame and unspeakable misery, as the Apostle saith, By one mans disobedience, many were made sinners. And, By the offences of one, the fault came upon all men to condemnation, Rom. 5. 1.

Phil. What reason is there that we all should thus be punished for another mans offence?

Theol. Because we were then all in him, and are now all of him: that is we are so descended out of his loyns, that of him we have not onely received our natural and corrupt bodies, but also by propagation have inherited his soul corruptions, as it were by hereditary right.

Phil. But for as much as some have dreamed that Adam, by his fall himself onely, and not his posterity

and that we have *is* corruption derived unto us by imitation, and not by propagation: therefore pray you shew me this more plainly.

Theol. Even as great Personages by committing of Treason, do not onely hurt themselves, but also stain their blood, and disgrace their posterity (for the children of such Nobles are dis-inherited, whose blood is attainted, till they be restored again by act of Parliament:) even so our blood being attainted by Adams transgression, we can inherit nothing of right, till we be restored by Christ.

Phil. Doubt this hereditary infection and contagion overpread our whole nature?

Theol. Yes truly, it is universal, extending it self throughout the whole man, both soul and body, both reason, understanding, will, and affections: for the Scriptures avouch, that we are dead in sins and Trespases, Eph. 2. 1. Col. 1. 2.

Phil. How understand you that?

Theol. Not of the deadness of the body, or the natural faculties of the soul, but of the spiritaual faculties.

Phil. Did Adam then lose his nature, and destroy it by his fall? or is our nature taken away by his fall?

Theol. Not so; our Nature was corrupted thereby, but not destroyed; for there remaineth in our Nature, Reason, Understanding, Will, and Affections, and we are not as a block or a stock, but by Adams disobedience we are blemished, maimed, and spoiled of all ability to understand aright or to will and do right, as it is written, 2 Cor. 3. 5. We are not sufficient of our selves to think any thing as of our selves; but our sufficiency is of God. And again, Phil. 2. 13. It is God which worketh in you, both the will and the deed, even of his good pleasure. And as concerning the other point, St. James saith, That all men are made after the similitude of God, (Jam. 3. 9.) meaning thereby, that there remain some reliques and parts of Gods Image, even in the most wicked men; as reason, understanding, &c. so that our nature was not wholly destroyed.

Phil.

Phil. Then you think there be some sparks and remnants left in us still of that excellent image of God which was in our first creation.

Theol. I think so indeed ; and it may plainly appear unto us in the wise speeches and writings of Heathen Poets and Philosophers : in all which we may, as by certain ruines, perceive what was the excellent frame and building of mans creation.

Phil. Can a man please God in any thing which he doth so long as he continueth in the state of nature.

Theol. No, not in any thing : for till we be in the state of grace, even our best actions are sinful, as preaching, prayer, almsdeeds, &c. as it is written : who can bring a clean thing out of that which is unclean ? Job 14.4 The Apostle also saith, They that are in the flesh, cannot please God. Rom. 8.8. that is, such as are still in their natural corruption. And our Lord Jesus himself saith, Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles ? Mat. 7. 16. meaning thereby that meer natural men can bring forth no fruit acceptable to God.

Phil. This is a very harsh and hard saying. I pray you for my further instruction make it more plain.

Theol. Man in the state of nature may do those things which of themselves are good ; but they do utterly fail in the manner of doing them ; they do them not as they should be done, that is, in faith, love, zeal, conscience of obedience, &c. Neither yet with any cheerfulness, delight or feeling ; but even as it were forcing themselves to do the outward actions. Thus did Cain sacrifice, the Pharisees pray, Ananias and Sapphira give alms, and the Jews offer up their oblations and burnt offerings.

Phil. Have men any true sight, or lively and sound feeling of this misery, and woeful estate, so long as they be merely natural ?

Theol. No surely, but are altogether blinded and hardned in it, being nothing desirous to come out of it, but do greatly please themselves in it and can hardly be perswaded that they are in any such woeful case.

case : as appeareth plainly in the example of that Ruler, who being commanded, or rather required of our Saviour Christ to keep the Commandments, answered, *All these have I kept from my youth, Luke 8:21.* And again, although the Church of *Laodicea*, was wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked, yet she thought her self rich, encreased with goods, and wanting nothing. It followeth then, that so long as men are in the state of nature, they have no true sight and feeling of their miseries.

Phil. Do you think, that all men, being meerly natural, are under the curse of the Law?

Theol. Yes certainly : and not onely so, but also under the very tyranny and dominion of Satan, though they know it not, feel it not, see it not, or perceive it not ; for all that are not in Christ are under the curse of the Law, and the power of Darkness, and the Devil : as appeareth, *Ephes. 2.2.* where the Devil is called the Prince that ruleth in the Air, even the spirit that now worketh in the Children of Disobedience, *2 Cor. 4. 4.* In another place he is called the God of this world, who blindeth the eyes of all unbelievers. And again it is said, That all men naturally are in his snare, being taken captive of him at his will.

Phil. Few will be perswaded of that ; they will say, they despise the Devil, and thank God they were never troubled with him.

Theol. Their hot words do nothing amend the matter, for the Devil is no more driven away with words, than with holy water ; but he sitteth in the tongues and mowths, nay, possesseth the very hearts and entrails of thousands, which say, They despise him, and are not troubled with him ; as appeareth manifestly by their particular actions, and the whole course of their life.

Phil. Methinks if the Devil do so inwardly possess the hearts and consciences of men, they should have some sight and feeling of it

Theol. The working of the Devil in mens souls (being an invisible Spirit) is with such unconceivable sleight

sleight and crafty conveyance, that men in the state of nature, cannot possibly feel it or perceive it: for how can a blind man see, or a dead man feel?

Phil. Shew me this more plainly.

Theol. Even as a crafty Juggler doth so profligate and blind mens outward senses by the delusions of Satan, that they think they see that which they see not, and feel that which they feel not: even so the Devil doth so delude and bewitch our inward senses, and the natural faculties of our souls, that we having a mist cast before our eyes, think we are that which we are not, see that which we see not, and feel that which we feel not. For the deep cunning of Satan lieth in this, that he can give us our deaths wound, and we shall never know who hurt us.

Phil. Few will believe this to be true.

Theol. True indeed; for few will believe the Scriptures; few will believe this, because few feel it. Where it is not felt, it can hardly be believed. Only the Elect do feel it, and therefore only the Elect do believe it. As for all others, they are the very Prentices and Bond-slaves of the Devil, which is a thousand times worse than to be a gally-slave.

Phil. How long do men continue in this woful state of nature, being under the curse of the Law, and the very slavery of Satan and sin?

Theol. Till they be regenerate and born again, and so brought into the state of grace; as our Lord saith, (*Joh. 3. 3.*) *Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.*

Phil. Do not many dye, and depart this life before they be born again, and consequently, before they be brought into the state of grace!

Theol. Yes no doubt, thousands; for many live forty or threescore years in this world, and in the end dye, and go out of this life, before they know wherefore they came into it; as it is written, (*Hos. 4. 6.*) *My people perish for want of knowledge.*

Phil. What may we think of such?

Theol.

Theol. I quake to speak what I think : for surely I do not see how such can be saved. I speak not now of infants and children; whereof some, no doubt, are saved by vertue of the promise and covenant, through the election of grace.

Phil. It seemeth then that you think none can be saved, but those onely which are born again.

Theol. I think so indeed.

Phil. I pray you tell me what the same regeneration and new birth is, whereof you speak.

Theol. It is a renewing and repairing of the corrupted and decayed estate of our souls ; as it witten, *Be ye changed by the renewing of your mind, Rom. 21.* And again, *Be renewed in the spirit of your mind, Eph. 4.2,3.*

Phil. Explain this more fully.

Theol. Even as the wild Olive retaineth his old nature, till he be grafted into the sweet Olive, but afterward it partakes of a new nature ; so we, till we be grafted into Christ, retain our old nature, but afterward we are turned into a new creature, as it is written, *if any man be in Christ he is a new creature, 2 Cor. 5.17.*

Phil. I understand not what you say.

Theol. You must know this, that as there is a natural birth of the whole man ; so there is also a spiritual birth of the whole man.

Phil. How is that ?

Theol. When as the natural faculties of the soul, as reason, understanding, will and affections, and the members of the body also are so sanctified, purged and rectified by grace, that we understand, will, and desire that which is good.

Phil. Cannot a man will and desire that which is good before he be born again ?

Theol. No more than a dead man can desire the good things of this life. For mans will is not free to consent to good, till it be enlarged by grace, and an unregenerated man doth sin necessarily, though not by constraint. For mans will is free from constraint, (for it sinneth of it self) but not from thralldom unto sin.

Phil.

Phil. You speak as if a man could do no other thing but sin till the new work be wrought in him.

Theol. That is my opinion indeed. For a man and his flesh are all one, till he be regenerate; they agree together like man and wife, they joyn together in all evil, they live and dye together: for when the flesh perisheth, the man perisheth.

Phil. Is not this regeneration a changing, or rather destroying of humane nature?

Theol. Nothing less; it is neither an abolishing, nor changing of the substance of body or soul, or any of the faculties thereof, but onely a rectifying and repairing of them, by removing the corruption.

Phil. Is then our natural corruption so purged and quite removed by the power of grace, as that it remaineth not at all in us, but that we are wholly freed of it?

Theol. Not so; for the reliques, and remnants, of our old nature, which the Scripture calleth the old man, do hang about us, and dwell in us, even until our dying day; as it is plainly proved in the ten last verses of the 7th to the *Romans*.

Phil. Then you affirm, that this new man, or new work of grace and regeneration, is imperfect in this life.

Theol. Yea, for the new creature or new work of grace can never be fully fashioned in this life, but is alwaies in fashioning. And as our faith and knowledge in this life are imperfect, so is our regeneration and sanctification.

Phil. You said before, that the regeneration or new birth is of the whole man; which speech seemeth to imply, that the new work of grace is entire and perfect.

Theol. You mistake the matter. For, although the new birth is universal, and of the whole man; yet it is not entire, perfect, pure, and without mixture of corruption; for it is written, *The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh.* The Apostle also prayeth that the *Thessalonians* may be sanctified throughout, in spirit, soul, and body.

Phil. This seemeth very obscure; I pray you make it more plain.

Theol.

Theol. You must note this, that the new work and the old, flesh and spirit, grace and corruption, are so intermingledly joyned together in all the faculties of the soul and body, as that the one doth ever fight against the other.

Phil. But tell me, I pray you, how you understand this intermingling of grace and corruption in the soul. Do you mean that grace is placed in one part of the soul, and corruption in another, so as they be sundred in place?

Theol. No, that is not my meaning, but this, that they be joyned and mingled (as I said) in and throughout the whole man. For the mind or understanding part is not one part flesh, and another spirit; but the whole mind is flesh, and the whole mind is spirit, partly one, and partly another. The same is to be said of the will and affections.

Phil. I pray you express it more plainly.

Theol. Even as the air in the dawning the day is not wholly light, or wholly dark, as at mid-night, or at noon-day; neither is it in one part light, and in another part dark, but the whole air is partly light and partly dark throughout; and as in a vessel of lukewarm water, the water it self is not onely cold, but heat and cold are mixed together in every part of the water, so is the flesh and the spirit mingled together in the soul of man. And this is the cause why these two contrary qualities fight together.

Phil. Out of doubt this doctrine of regeneration is a very great mystery.

Theol. Yes certainly, it is a secret of secrets, which the wise of this world cannot comprehend.

Phil. Some think that courtesie, kindness, good nurture, good nature, and good education, are regeneration; and that courteous and good natured men, must needs be saved.

Theol. They are generally deceived; for these things do not necessarily accompany salvation, but are to be found in such as are altogether profane and irreligious: yet we are to love such good outward qualities, and the men in whom we find them.

Phil

Phil. What say you then to learning, wit and policy? Are not these things of the essence of Religion, and prove a Regeneration?

Theol. No, no; for they be external gifts which may be in the most wicked men; as in Papists, Heathen Poets, and Philosophers, yet we are greatly to reverence learned and wise men, although the new and inward work be not as yet wrought; for that onely is of God that is from above.

Phil. The common people do attribute much to learning and policy; for they will say, Such a man is learned and wise, and knoweth the Scriptures as well as any of them, and yet he doth not thus and thus.

Theol. It is one thing to know the History and Letter of the Scripture, and another thing to believe and feel the power thereof in the heart, which is only from the sanctifying spirit which none of the wise of this world can have.

Phil. It is a common opinion, that if a man hold the truth in judgement; be no Papist or Heretick, but leadeth an honest civil life, then he must of necessity be saved.

Theol. That followeth not; for many come so far, which yet notwithstanding have not the inward touch.

Phil. That seemeth strange. For many will say, As long as they be neither whore nor thief, nor spotted with such like gross sins, they trust in God they shall be saved.

Theol. They erre, not knowing the Scriptures. For many thousands are in great danger of losing their souls for ever, which are free from such notorious and horrible vices: nay, many which in all the world are counted good honest men, good true dealers, good neighbours, and good townsmen.

Asun. I pray you, sir, give me leave a little. I have heard all your speech hitherto, and I like reasonable well of it; but now I can forbear no longer, my conscience urgeth me to speak: For methinks you go too far, you go beyond your learning in this, that you condemn good neighbours and good townsmen. You say, Many such men are in danger of losing their souls; but I will never believe it
while

while I live : For if such men be not saved, I cannot tell who shall.

Theol. But you must learn to know out of the Scriptures, that all outward honesty and righteousness, without the true knowlegde and inward feeling of God, availeth not to eternal life, As our Saviour Christ saith, *Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven, Matth. 5. 20.* It is also written, (*Act. 17. 13.*) that when *Paul* preached at *Berea*, many honest men and women did believe; that is, such as were outwardly honest, or honest to the world only; for they could not be truly and inwardly honest before they did believe. Therefore you see that this outward honesty and civility, without the inward regeneration of the Spirit, availeth not to eternal life: and then consequently, all your honest world men are in great danger of losing their souls for ever.

Asun. What sound reason can you yield, why such honest men should be condemned?

Theol. Because many such are utterly void of all true knowledge of God and his Word. Nay, which is more, many of them despise the Word of God, and hate all the Zealous Professors of it. They esteem Preachers but as Praters, and Sermons as good Tales; they esteem a Preacher no more than a Shoemaker, they regard the Scriptures no more than their old Shoes. What hope is there then I pray you that such men should be saved? Doth not the Holy Ghost say, *How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?*

Asun. You go too far, you judge too hardly of them.

Theol. Not a whit. For all experience sheweth, that they mind, dream and dore of nothing else day and night, but this world, lands and leases, grounds and livings, kine and Sheep, and how to wax rich. All their thoughts, words and works, are of these and such like things. And their actions do most manifestly declare, that they are of the earth, and speak of the earth, and there is nothing in them but earth, earth.

As

As for Sermons, they care not how few they hear. And for the Scriptures they regard them not, they read them not, esteeme them not worth the while, there is nothing more irksome unto them; they had rather pill straws, or do any thing, than hear, read, or confer of the Scriptures. And, as the Prophet saith, *The word of the Lord is as a reproach unto men; they have no delight in it, Jer. 6.10.*

Phil. I marvel much, that such men should live so honestly to the world-ward.

Theol. No marvel at all, for many bad men, whose hearts are worm-eaten within; yet for some outward and carnal respects, do abstain from the gross act of sin; as some for credit, some for shame, some for fear of Law, some for fear of punishment; but none for love of God, for zeal of conscience, or of obedience. For it is a sure thing, that the wicked may have that spirit which doth repress, but not that which doth renew.

Phil. It seemeth then by your speeches, that some which are not regenerate, do in some things excel the children of God.

Theol. Most certain it is that some of them in outward gifts, and the outward carriage of themselves do go beyond some of the Elect.

Phil. Shew me, I pray you, in what gifts.

Theol. In learning, discretion, Justice, temperance, prudence, patience, liberality, affability, kindness, courtesie, good nature, &c.

Phil. Methinks it should not be possible.

Theol. Yes truly: for some of Gods dear Children, in whom no doubt the inward work is truly and soundly wrought, yet are so troubled and incumbred with a crabbed and crooked nature, and clogged with some master sin, as some with anger, some with pride, some with covetousness, some with lusts, some one way and some another; all which breaking out in them, do so blemish them and their profession, that they cannot so shine forth unto men as otherwise no doubt they would.

would : and this is their wound, their grief, and their heart-smart, and that which costeth them many a tear, and many a prayer ; and yet can they not get the full victory over them, but still they are left in them, as a prick in the flesh to humble them.

Phil. Yet love should cover a multitude of such infirmities in Gods Children.

Theol. It should do so indeed : but there is great want of love, even in the best ; and the worst sort espying these infirmities in the godly, run upon them with open mouth, & take upon them to condemn them utterly, and to judge their hearts, saying, They be hypocrites, dissemblers and there is none worse than they.

Phil. But do you not think, that there be some counterfeits even amongst the greatest professors.

Theol. Yes, no doubt, there be and alwayes have been some very Hypocrites in Church, but we must take heed of judging and condemning all for some. For it were very much to condemn Christ and his eleven Disciples because of one Judas ; or the whole Primitive Church. for one Ananias and Saphira.

Phil. But I hope you are of this mind, that some regenerate men, even in outward gifts, and their outward carriage, are comparable with many others.

Theol. Questionless very many. For they being guided by Gods Spirit, and upheld by his grace, do walk very uprightly and unblameably towards men.

Phil. Yet there resteth one scruple ; for it seemeth very strange unto me, that men of so discreet carriage as you speak, and of so many good parts, should not be saved. It is great pity such men should be damned.

Theol. It seemeth so unto us indeed ; but God is onely wise. And you must note, that as there be some infirmities in Gods children, which he correcteth with temporal chastisements, and yet rewardeth their faith, love, and inward service and obedience with eternal life, so there be some good things in the wicked, and them that are without Christ which God rewardeth with temporal blessings, & yet punisheth them eternally for

for their unbelief and hardness of heart.

Phil. Now you have reasonably well-satisfied me touching the doctrine of regeneration, and the manifold errors and deceits, that are in it, and of it. I pray you let us now proceed; and first of all tell me by what means the new birth is wrought.

Theol. By the preaching of the word, as the outward means; and the secret work of the Spirit, as the inward means, 1 Pet. 1. 2, 3. Joh. 15. Añ. 10. 44. Eph. 4. 3.

Phil. Many hear the Word preached, and are nothing the better, but rather the worse; what I pray you, is the cause of that?

Theol. Mens own incredulity and hardness of heart, because God in his wrath leaveth them to themselves, and depriveth them of his Spirit, without the which all preaching is vain. For except the Spirit do follow the Word into our hearts, we can find no joy, taste nor comfort therein, Añ. 16. 14.

Phil. Cannot a man attain unto regeneration and the new birth, without the Word and the Spirit.

Theol. No verily. For they are the instruments and means whereby God doth work it.

Antil. Why may not a man have as good a faith to Godward that heareth no sermons, as he that heareth all the Sermons in the world?

Theol. Why may not he that eateth not meat, be as fat and as well-liking, as he that eateth all the meat in the world; for is not the preaching of the Word the food of our souls?

Antil. I like not so much hearing of Sermons, and reading of the Scriptures, except men could keep them better.

Theol. Faithful and honest hearers do therefore hear, that they may be more able to observe and do; for a man cannot do the will of God before he know it, and he cannot know it without hearing and reading.

Antil. I marvel what good men do get by gadding to Sermons, and poring so much in the Scripture; or what are they better than others? there are none more full of envy and malice than they: they will do their neighbour a
shrewd

shrewd turn as soon as any body ; and therefore in mine opinion, they be but a company of hypocrites and precise fools.

Theol. You judge uncharitably. Full little do you know what they feel, or what good Gods people get by hearing of the VVord. For the work of the Spirit in the hearts of the elect is very secret and altogether hid from the world ; as it is written, (*Joh. 3.8*) *The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whither it goeth, or whence it cometh ; so is every man that is born of the Spirit. And again, The things of God knoweth no man, but the spirit of God.*

Antil. Tush, tush, what needs all this ado ? If a man say his Lords Prayer, his ten Commandments, and his Belief, and keep them, and say no body harm, nor do no body harm, and do as he would be done to, have a good faith to God-ward, and be a man of Gods belief, no doubt he shall be saved without all this running to Sermons, and prattling of Scripture.

Theol. Now you pour it out indeed : you think you have spoken wisely. But, alas ! you have bewrayed your great ignorance ; for you imagine a man may be saved without the VVord, which is a gross error.

Antil. It is no matter ; say you what you will, and all the Preachers in the world besides, as long as I serve God, and say my prayers duly and truly, morning and evening, and have a good faith in God, and put my whole trust in him, and do my true intent, and have a good mind to God-ward, and have a good meaning, although I am not learned, yet I hope it will serve the turn for my souls health. For that God which made me, must save me. It is not you that can save me, for all your learning, and all your Scriptures.

Theol. You may very fitly be compared to a sick man, who having his brain distempered with heat, raveth, and speaketh idly he cannot tell what. For the Holy Ghost saith, (*Prov. 28. 9.*) *He that turneth away his ear from hearing the Law, even his prayer shall be abominable.* And again, (*Prov. 13. 13.*) *He that despiseth*

despise the Word, shall be destroyed. So long therefore as you despise Gods word, and turn away your Ear from hearing his Gospel preached, all your Prayers, your fantastical serving of God, your good meanings, and your good intents are to no purpose; but most odious and loathsome in the sight of God: as it is written, (*Isa. 1. 14.*) *My soul hateth your new moons, and your appointed feasts; they are a Burthen unto me, I am weary to bear them. When you stretch out your hands I will hide mine eyes from you; and though you make many Prayers, I will not hear: for your hands are full of blood.* And again, the Lord saith by the same Prophet, (*Isa. 66. 3.*) *He that killeth a bullock, is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a Sheep, as if he cut off a Dogs neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swines blood: he that burneth incense, as if he blessend an Idol.* Where you see the Lord telleth you his mind touching these matters; to wit, that all your prayers, services, good meanings, &c. are abominable unto him, so long as you walk in ignorance, profaneness, disobedience and contempt of the Gospel: for he saith in the words immediately going before, *To him will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite Spirit, and trembleth at my word.*

Asun. I grant indeed, for them that are idle, and have little to do, it is not amiss now and then to hear a Sermon and read the Scriptures: but we have no leisure, we must follow our business, we cannot live by the Scriptures; they are not for plain folk, they are too high for us, we will not meddle with them. They belong to Preachers and Ministers.

Theol. Christ saith, (*Joh. 13.*) *My sheep hear my voice, and I give unto them eternal life.* If therefore you refuse to hear the voice of Christ, you are none of his Sheep, neither can you have eternal life. And in another place our Lord Jesus saith, (*John. 8. 47.*) *He that is of God, heareth Gods word. Ye therefore hear it not, because ye are not of God.* St. Paul writing to all sorts of men, both rich and poor, high and low, men and

and women, young and old, exhorteth, (*Col. 3. 16.*) that the word of Christ may dwell plenteously in them all, in all wisdom. You see therefore that the Apostles would have all sorts of people that have souls to save, to be well acquainted with the Scriptures. Therefore you may as well say you will not meddle with God, with Christ, nor with everlasting life, as to say, you will not meddle with the Scriptures.

Asun. Well, I cannot read, and therefore I cannot tell what Christ, or what St. Paul may say; but this I am sure of, that God is a good man (*worshipped might he be*) he is merciful, and that we must be saved by our good prayers, and good serving of God.

Theol. You speak foolishly and ignorantly in all that you say, having no ground for any thing you speak, but your own fancy, and your own conceit: and yet you will believe your own fancy against all preachers, and against all that can be spoken out of the Word. But I pray you give me leave a little: if a man dream that he shall be a King, and in the morning when he is awake, perswadeth himself it shall be so, may he not be justly laughed at as having no ground for it: Even so may all they which believe their own dreams and fantasies touching salvation. But it is true which Solomon saith, *Prov. 14. 15. A fool believeth every thing: that copper is gold, and a counter an angel.* And assuredly great reason there is, that he which will not believe God, should be given over to believe the Devil, his dream, and his fancy.

Asun. I pray you instruct me better then.

Theol. You had need indeed to be better instructed; for the Devil hath slyly deluded your soul, and cast a mist before your eyes, making you believe the Crow is white, and that your estate is good before God, whereas indeed it is woful and miserable.

Asun. I despise the Devil with all my heart. But I pray you tell me how it comes to pass that I am thus deceived?

Theol. This is it that deceiveth you and many others:

others: that you measure your selves by your selves, and by others, which is a false meet-wand. For you seem to lie straight, so long as you are measured by your selves, and by others, but lay the rule of Gods Word unto you, and then you lie altogether crooked.

Afun. What other thing is there that deceiveth me?

Theol. Another thing that deceiveth you is your own heart; for you know not your own heart, but are altogether deceived therein: (*Jer. 17. 9.*) *for the heart is deceivable above all things.* He is a wise man, and greatly enlightned, that knoweth his own heart. But you are blind, and know not what is within you; but dimly imagine you shall be saved, and hope you know not what of eternal life. And because blindness maketh you bold, you will seem to be resolute in words, and say, It is pitty he should live which doth any whit doubt of his Salvation. And assuredly you speak as you think, and as you know. For, for ought you know to the contrary, it seemeth so: though indeed and in truth it is not so: for you are deluded with a false light. And sometimes no doubt you have pricks, gripes, terrors and inward accusations of Conscience for all your bold and resolute Speeches.

Afun. Truly I never heard so much before.

Theol. That is because you shut your eyes, and stop your ears against God, and all goodness. (*Pf. 58. 4, 5.*) *You are like the deaf Adder, which heareth not the voice of the charmer, though he be most expert in charming.*

Afun. Well then, if it be so, I would be glad now to learn, if you would teach me. And as you have shewed me the means whereby the true birth is wrought, so now shew me the certain signs and tokens thereof; whereby all men may certainly know that they are sanctified, regenerate, and shall be saved.

Theol. There be eight infallible notes and tokens of a regenerate mind, which may well be termed the eight signs of Salvation; and they are these. 1. A love to the children of God. 2. A delight in his Word. 3. Often and fervent Prayer. 4. Zeal of Gods glory.

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5. Denyal of our selves. 6. Patient bearing of the Cross, with profit and comfort. 7. Faithfulness in our calling. 8. Honest, just, and conscionable dealing in all our actions amongst men.

Phil. Now that you shewed us the evident signs of mans salvation, shew us also the signs of condemnation.

Theol. The Contraries unto these are manifest signs of Damnation. 1. No love to the Children of God. 2. No delight in his Word. 3. Seldom and cold Prayers. 4. Coldness in God's matters. 5. Trusting to our selves. 6. Impatience under the Cross. 7. Unfaithfulness in our calling. 8. Unhonest and unconscionable dealing.

Phil. No doubt, if a man be infected with these, they be shewd signs that a man is extreemly soul-sick, and in a very dangerous case. But are there none yet more evident and apparent signs of Condemnation than these.

Theol. Yea verily, there be nine very clear and manifest signs of a mans condemnation.

Phil. I pray you let me hear what they be.

Theol. 1. Pride. 2. Whoredom. 3. Covetousness. 4. Contempt of the Gospel. 5. Swearing. 6. Lying. 7. Drunkenness. 8. Idleness. 9. Oppression.

Phil. These be gross things indeed.

Theol. They may not unfitly be termed the nine Belzebubs of the world; and he that hath these signs upon him, is in a most woful case.

Phil. What if a man be infected with some two or three of these?

Theol. Whosoever is infected with three of them, is in great danger of loosing his soul. For all these be deadly venome and rank poyson to the Soul; and either the three first, or the three last, or the middle three, are enough to poyson the soul, and sting it to death. Nay, to say the truth, a man were as good gripe a toad, and handle a snake, as meddle with any one of these.

Phil. Is every one of them so dangerous?

Theol. Questionless: for they be the very plague sores of the soul. If any man have a plague-sore up

Cross on his body, we use to say Gods tokens are upon him,
calling Lord have mercy on him. So we may truly say, if
r. acti- any man be throughly and totally infected at the
f. mans heart with any one of these, God's tokens are upon
 his Soul, Lord have mercy upon him.

t signs Phil. Many do not think these to be such dangerous mat-
God ters as you make them, and many there be which make
 light of them.

ayers. Theol. True indeed, for the most part of men are
selves altogether shut up in blindness and hardness of heart,
in our having neither sight nor feeling of their sins, and
 therefore make light of them, thinking there is no
se, they such danger.

and in a Phil. It is most certain, that men are given to lessen
evident and extenuate their sins : or else to hide them, and daub
 them over with many cunning shifts and vain excuses.
and ma- For men are ever ready to take covert, and will writhe
 and wreath (like snakes) to hide their sins : yea, if it
tousness, were possible, to make sin no sin, to make virtue vice,
Lying and vice virtue . Therefore I pray you lay open unto me
 out of the Scriptures, the grievousness, and ugliness of
 their sins.

he nine Theol. The stinking filthiness of these sins, is so
ese signs great and horrible, that no tongue or pen of man is
 sufficient fully to manifest and lay open the same, ac-
or three cording to the proper nature and being thereof: yet
 notwithstanding, I will do my endeavour to lay them
 open in some measure, that all men may the more
 loath them.

f them, Phil. I pray you then, first of all begin with pride.

these be Theol. You say well; for that indeed may well
ul; and stand in the fore-front: sith it is a master-Devil, and
e middle the master-pock of the Soul.

ing it to Phil. Shew me out of the Scriptures that pride is so
as good grievous and loathsome.

with any Theol. Solomon saith, Prov. 16. 5. Every one that is
 proud in heart, is an abomination to the Lord. Which
 plainly sheweth that God doth detest and abhor
 proud men. And is it not a fearful thing, think you,

to be abhorred of God ? And in the same chapter verse 18. he saith, *Pride goeth before destruction, and a high mind before a fall* ; wherein he sheweth , that pride is the fore-runner of some deadly down fall either by disgracing , or displacing ; For it is an old and true Proverb, *Pride will have a fall*. And oftentimes, when men are most lifted up, then are they nearest unto it : as the examples of *Haman*, *Nebuchadnezzar* and *Herod*, do plainly declare. When the milt swelleth, the rest of the body pineth away, even so when the heart is puffed up with pride, the whole man is in danger of destruction. Moreover, the Holy Ghost saith, (*Job. 18. 5. 15.*) *Job* saith of such kind of men, *The spark of his fire shall not shine ; fear shall dwell in his house, and brimstone shall be scattered upon his habitation*. And in another place he saith, (*Job 20. 26.*) *The fire which is not blown shall devour him*. Methinks therefore, if there were any spark of grace in us, these terrible speeches of the Holy Ghost might serve to humble us, and pull down our pride, especially sith the Scriptures do affirm that God resisteth the proud, and setteth himself against them, and therefore wo unto them for if God take against a man, who can reclaim him ? For he doth whatsoever he will.

Phil. But tell me I pray you, when you speak against pride, what pride it is that you mean.

Theol. I mean all pride, both that which is inward in the heart, and that also which breaketh out in mens foreheads : I mean that which apparently sheweth it self in mens words and works.

Phil. Do you mean pride also of mens gifts.

Theol. Yes surely : for there is no pride worse or more dangerous than that. Beware, saith one, of spiritual pride : as to be proud of our learning, wit, knowledge, reading, writings, sermons, prayers, godliness, policy, valour, strength, riches, honor, birth, beauty, authority. For God hath not given such gifts unto men to the end they should make sale

war

ware of them, and set them a sun shining to behold ; seeking onely themselves with their gifts, the vain praise of the multitude and applause of the people , so robbing God of his honour, and proudly arrogating to themselves, that which is due unto God, which is the praise of his gifts : But he hath given his gifts to another end, namely that we should use them to his glory and the good of others, (either in Church or Commonwealth) especially of those which do most concern us.

Phil. Yet we see commonly men of greatest gifts are most proud.

Theol. True indeed, for the finest cloth is soonest stained. And as worms ingender sooner in soft and tender wood, than in that which is more hard and knotty ; and as moths do breed sooner in fine wool, than in course flocks : even so pride and vain glory do sooner assault an excellent and rare man in all kind of knowledge and vertue, than another of meaner gifts, and therefore pride is said to spring out of the ashes of all vertues. For men will be proud, because they are wise, learned, godly, patient, humble, &c. pride therefore may very fitly be compared to the crab-stock pines, which grow out of the root of the very best Apple-tree. Therefore to say the truth, this is one of the last engines and weapons which the devil useth for the overthrowing of Gods own Children, even to blow them up with pride, as it were with gun-powder. For as we see it come to pass in the siege of strong holds when no battery or force of shot will prevail, the last remedy and policy is to undermine it, and blow it up with trains of gun-powder : so when Satan can no way prevail against some excellent Servants of God, his last device is to blow them up with pride as it were with gun-powder.

Phil. I see it is a special grace of God, for men of great gifts to be humble minded : and he is an odd man of a thousand, which excelling in gifts, excelleth in humility; and the more gifts he hath, the more humbly he walks :

not contemning others, but esteeming them better than himself. For commonly we are the worse for God's gifts because we have not the right use of them; and again because they ingender so much proud flesh in us, that we had need daily to be corzied. Therefore God sheweth great favour and mercy to that man, whom he humbles and taketh down by any afflictions or infirmities whatsoever. For otherwise it is sure, proud flesh would altogether overgrow us.

Theol. You have spoken the truth: for the Apostle himself confesseth that he was tempted and troubled this way, (2 Cor. 12.) and had like to have been puffed up out of measure with the abundance of his revelations, but that God in great mercy sent him cooler and a rebater, to wit, a prick in the flesh (which he called the Messenger of Satan) whereby the Lord cured him of his pride. And even so doth he cure many of us of our pride, by throwing us into Sathan, leaving us to our selves, and giving us over to commit some gross evil, even to fall down and break our necks, and all to the end he may humble us, tame us, and pull down our pride, which is the sickness we are heart-sick of. It is good for us therefore to be humbled in the abundance of grace, that we be not proud of that which we have, or that which we have done. For humility in sin, is better than pride in well-doing.

Phil. Herein surely appeareth the great wisdom and mercy of God: that he so graciously bringeth good out of evil, and turneth our afflictions, infirmities, falls and down-falls, to his glory, and our good.

Theol. It is most true. For even as of the flesh a Viper is made a sovereign Medicine to cure those which are stung of a Viper; and as Physicians expoyson with poysen: so God according to his manifold wisdom, doth, of the infirmities which remain in us after Regeneration, cure other more dangerous diseases; as pride, vain glory, and presumption. O blessed therefore be his Name, for ever, while

thus mercifully causeth all things to work together for the good of his own people, of whom these things are especially to be understood.

Phil. Is there no cause why men of great gifts should glory in their gifts.

Theol. No surely none at all. For the Apostle saith, (1. Cor. 4.) *Who seperateth thee? And what hast thou that thou hast not received? If thou hast received it, why boastest thou, as though thou hadst not received it; Where the Apostle plainly sheweth that no man is to be proud of his gifts, because they are none of his own; he hath but received them to use. We count him worthy to be laughed at as a fool, who having borrowed brave apparel of others (as a silken Gown, fatten Doublet, a chain of Gold, Velvet Breeches, &c.) should proudly jet in the streets in them, as if they were his own: even so are they worthy to be chronifor fools, which are proud of good gifts, which are none of their own. Therefore the Prophet Jeremiah saith, Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, nor the strong man in his strength, neither the rich man in his riches; but let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, Jer. 9. 23. To this point also well saith the heathen Poet, (Theocritus) No man can escape the punishment of pride; therefore in greatest prosperity be not puffed up.*

Phil. Yet it is a wonder to see how proud surly, haughty, stately, insolent, and thraasonical some be, because of their gifts: they think they touch the clouds with their heads, and that the earth doth not bear them; they take themselves to be petty Angels, or some wonderful weights: they condemn and disdain all others which have not the like gifts: they do contemptuously overlook them, as a Lyon should overlook a Mouse, a King a Begger; or, as we say in a proverb, as the Devil looked over Lincoln.

Theol. Oh proud dust! Oh haughty worms meat! If they would bring their hearts before God, and their consciences, thoughts and affections, to be judged by his law, it would soon cool them, and take them down

well enough ; they should see their wants and imperfections to be so great, that they indeed should have no more cause to boast of their gifts than the Black more hath of his whiteness, because his teeth are white. The Holy Ghost cuts all our combs, and plucketh down all pride of flesh, when he saith, (*Job 35. 25.*) *How small a thing doth man understand of God ?*

Phil. I pray you let us proceed to speak of the outward and gross pride of the world : and first of all tell me what you think of pride in apparel.

Theol. I think it to be a vanity of all vanities, and a folly of all follies : for to be proud of apparel, is as if a thief should be proud of his Halter, a beggar of his clouts, a child of his gay, or a fool of his lyable

Phil. Yet we see how proud many (especially Women) be of such bables. For when many have spent a great part of the day in tricking and trimming, pricking and pinning, pranking and pouncing, girding and lacing, and braving up themselves in most exquisite manner, then when they come into the streets, with their pedlers shop upon their backs, and carry their crests very high, taking themselves to be little Angels, or at least some-what more than other Women. Whereupon they do so exceedingly swell with pride, that it is to be feared they will burst with it as they walk in the streets. And truly we may think the very stones in the street, and the beams of the Houses, do quake and wonder at their monstrous, intolerable and excessive pride. For it seemeth that they are altogether a lump of pride, a mass of pride, even altogether made of pride, and nothing else but pride, pride.

Theol. You seem to be very hot in the matter.

Asun. Marry, sir, I like him the better : for the world was never so full of pride as it is now adayes.

Theol. Alas, alas ; indeed who can hold his peace at the pride of this Age. What a thing is it, that flesh and blood, worms meat, dust and ashes, dirt and dung, should so brave it out with their trim clouts, and that in the sight of God, Angels and Men : for the time will come, when both they and all their

gay

gay clouts shall be buried in a grave : yea, as Job saith, (Job. 17. 13, 14.) *The Grave shall be their house, and they shall make their bed in the dark. And when they shall say to corruption, Thou art my Father : and to the worm, Thou art my Mother and my sister.* What then shall it avail them thus to have ruffled it out in all their bravery, when as suddenly they shall go down to destruction ? What did it profit the rich man to be sumptuously clothed, and fare deliciously every day, when his body was buried in the dust, and his soul in hell-fire ?

Asun. I pray you sir, what say you to these great ruffs which are born up with supporters and rebatoes, as it were with post and rail ?

Theol. What should I say, but God be merciful unto us ? For such things do draw down the wrath and vengeance of God upon us all : and, as the Apostle saith (Col. 3. 6.) *For such things sake, the wrath of God cometh upon the Children of disobedience.* And truly we may well fear, that God will plague us for our abominable pride.

Asun. What say you then to these double and redoubled ruffs, (which are now in common use) strouting fardingals, long locks, fore-tufts, shag hair, and all these new fashions which are devised and taken up every day ?

Theol. I say, they are far from that Plainness, simplicity and modesty, which hath been in former ages : our fore-fathers knew no such things. It is recorded of William Rufus, [Grafton's Chron.] sometime King of this Land, that when his Chamberlain on a time brought him a new pair of hose, he demanded of him what they cost ; who answered, Three shillings : whereat the King being somewhat moved, commanded him to prepare him a pair of a mark. If Kings were then thought to exceed, that bestowed a mark upon a pair of hose, what is it to be thought of many mean men in these our days (yea, such as have no living and are scarce of a good calling) which bestow as much upon a pair, as the King did upon two, when

when he was thought most of all to exceed? But alas, alas, we have passed all bounds of modesty and measure; there is no hope with us, Our Land is too heavy of this sin. For the pride of all Nations and the follies of all Countries are upon us; how shall we bear them? And as for these new fashions, the more new they be, the more foolish, and as foolish they that use them. For with our new fashions we are grown clean out of fashion. If we had as many fashions of our bodies, as we have of our attire we should have as many fashions as fingers and toes. But vain men and women do apparently shew their vain minds by following so greedily such vain toys and fashions.

Asun. It was never a good world since starching and steeling, busks and whale-bones, supporters and rebatoes, full moons and hobby-horses, painting and dying, with selling of favour and complexion, came to be in use. For since these came in, civetousness, oppression, and deceit have increased. For how else should pride be maintained? And sure it is within these ninety years these things were not known, nor heard of. And what say you then to painting of faces, laying open of naked breasts, dying of hair, wearing of Periwigs, and other hair-coronets, and top-gallants?

And what say you to our artificial women, which will be better than God hath made them? They like man's handy-work, they will mend it, and have other complexions, other faces, other hair, other bones, other breasts, and other bellies than God made them.

Theol. This I say that you and I, and all the Lord's people have great and just cause of mourning, weeping, and lamentation, because such abomination is committed in Israel. (*Psal.* 119.) David's eyes gushed out with Rivers of tears, because men kept not God's Laws, and an horrible fear came upon him, because men forsook the law of God. (*Jer.* 9. 1.) *Jeremiab.* did sigh in secret, wishing that his head were full of water, and his eyes a fountain of tears, be-
cause

cause of the sins of the people. (*Neh. i. 4.*) *Nehemiah* mourned for the transgression of God's people. *Lot's* just soul was vexed with the unclean conversation of the *Sodomites*; And shall we mourn nothing at all for these things? Shall we be no whit-grieved for the pride of our Land? Shall we shed no tears for such horrible and intollerable abominations? They are odious in the sight of God and men: the air stinketh of them. It is God's marvellous patience that the Devil doth not carry them away quick, and rid the Earth of them: or that fire and brimstone doth not come down from Heaven, and consume them.

Antil. You are too hot in these matters of attire: you make more of them than there is cause.

Asun. I con him thanks: God's blessing on his heart, I shall love him the better while I know him, because he is so earnest against such shameful and detestable pride. Is it not a shame that Women professing true Religion, should make themselves such Pictures, Puppets, and Peacocks as they do? And yet I hear few Preachers in the Pulpit speak against it:

Antil. I marvel you should be so earnest in matter of apparel. You know well enough that apparel is an indifferent thing: and that Religion and the Kingdom of God doth not consist in these things.

Theol. I know right well that apparel in its own nature is a thing indifferent; but lewd, wanton, immodest and offensive apparel is not indifferent. For all such abuse taketh away the indifferency of them, and maketh them sinful, and as ill by circumstance. For otherwise why should the Lord threaten by his Prophet, that he would visit the Princes, and the Kings Children, and all such as were cloathed with strange apparel, that is, the fashions of other Countries? *Zephan. i. 8.* Again, why should the Lord so plague the proud dames, and mincing minions of *Jerusalem*, for their pride and vanity in attire, if there were no evil in such kind of abuse? The Lord saith thus, in the third of *Esay* against those brave and gallant dames,

dames, Because the Daughters of Sion are haughty, and walk with stretched-out necks, and with wandring eyes walking and mincing as they go, and make a tinkling with their feet; therefore shall the Lord make the heads of the Daughters of Sion bald, and the Lord shall discover their secret parts. In that day shall the Lord take away the ornament of the slippers, and the cauls, and the round tires, the sweet balls, and the bracelets, and the bonnets, the tires of the head, and the shooes, the head-bands, and the tablets, the ear-rings, the rings, and the mufflers, the costly apparel, and the veils, and the wimples, and the crisping pins, and the glasses, and the fine linnen, and the hoods, and the lawns. And instead of sweet savour, there shall be stink, and instead of a girdle, a rent; and instead of dressing the hair, baldness, and instead of a stomacher, a girding of sack-cloth: and burning instead of beauty. Then shall her Gates mourn and lament, and she being desolate shall sit upon the ground.

Thus we see how terrible the Lord threatneth the gallant dames of Jerusalem, for their excessive and abominable pride. And this may well be a mirrour, for the proud minions of our age; which assuredly may well fear, the Lord will bring some such judgment upon them as he did upon the daughters of Jerusalem. For their sin is as great in this kind, as was the Daughters of Sion, and God is the same God now that he was then to punish it?

Antil. Tush, never speak so much of these matters of apparel; for we must do as others do, and follow the fashion, or else we shall not be esteemed.

Theol. If you follow them not, you shall be more esteemed of God, of his Angels, Saints, and all good men. As for all others, if you esteem them more than these, you shew what you are.

Antil. Well, for all that, say you what you will, pride is in the heart, and not in the apparel: for one may be proud of plain apparel, as well as of costly. And some are as proud of their falling bands and little sets, as others are of their great ruffs.

Theol.

Theol. You speak foolishly, for how know you that? can you judge mens hearts and inward affections? can you say when mens and womens apparel is sober, modest and Christian like, that they have proud hearts, and proud of that attire? You go very far indeed to judge the hearts. You ought to judge charitably of such as go soberly and modestly attired, even that their hearts is according unto their attire. And for you, we may rather think your heart is vain, light, and foolish, because your attire doth strongly argue it. And as the Prophet saith, *The tryal of your countenance testifieth against you: you declare your sins as Sodom, and hide them not, Isa. 3. 9.*

Phil. I pray you then set down some Rules for apparel out of the Scriptures.

Theol. I may well set down what I will: but surely most Men and women will do what they list. For verily it may be thought that many of this Age have for-sworn God and his Word, and all goodness. For they are come to this point, let God say what he will. They will do what they list. For as the Prophet saith, *They have made a covenant with Hell, and with death, and are grown to an agreement, Isa. 28. 15.* And I do verily think, if God himself should come down from Heaven in his own person, and dissuade men and women from this vanity of apparel, yet would they still use it, as it were in despite of God, and, as it were, to anger him the more. For they are so extraordinarily enamoured, and so immoderately delighted with it, and do so continually and altogether dote on it, and are so wood-mad of it, that they will have it though men and Angels, and all the world say nay: nay, which is more, though they should go to the Devil quick with it. And therefore it is but lost labour to speak against it, preach against it, or write against it. It is but to plow the Sea, or knock at a deaf mans door; for there is no hope of any Reformation. Only this we gain, that the world is reprov'd and convicted of sin. And these things shall

shall stand in a record against them, in the last day: so that they may say they had a fair warning, and that there was a Prophet among them.

Phil. Yet for all this, I pray you set us down some Directions and Rules out of Gods Holy Book, concerning attire. For albeit some be very bad and outrageous in these things, yet there be some others which are well disposed, and will (no doubt) make some Conscience to frame themselves according the Rule of Gods word.

Theol. Well then for their sakes which are well disposed, I will set down some few directions. St. Paul, in 1. Tim. 2.9. willeth that women should array themselves in comely apparel, with shamefastness and modesty, as becometh Women that profess the fear of God: and not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly apparel. (1 Pet. 3.3.) The Apostle St. Peter giveth like Rules also; for he saith, speaking of Christian Matrons, and Professors of Holy Religion, That apparel must not be outward, that is, not consist so much in outward bravery; as broidered hair, gold put about, &c. as it must be inward, that the hidden man of the heart may be cloathed with a meek and quiet spirit, which is a thing before God much set by. For after this manner, saith he, in times past the holy women which trusted in God, did attire themselves; as Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and such like ancient and grave Matrons.

Phil. Wherein doth this inward clothing specially consist?

Theol. In four things, which are set down in the fore named places, to wit, shamefacedness modesty, a quiet Spirit, and a meek spirit.

Phil. These be fine suits of apparel indeed; I would all women would put them on; and never put them off, but wear them continually; for they are the better for wearing, though all other apparel be the worse.

Theol. If women would deck themselves inwardly with these aforesaid Vertues, they would be unto them as ornaments of Gold, and jewels of pearl. (Prov.

(Prov. 31.30.) For the woman that feareth the Lord shall be praised.

Phil. But now, I pray you, Sir, set down your judgment for outward attire.

Theol. This is all that I can say touching that point, That it must be as the Apostle saith, comely, decent, handsome, neat, and seemly ; not light, not wanton, not lascivious, not immodest, not offensive.

Phil. But who shall judge what is comely, sober, handsome, modest ? &c. For every man and woman will say, their apparel is decent, and cleanly, how gallant, brave, and flaunting soever they be.

Theol. Herein the examples of the most godly, wise, grave, and modest men and women are to be followed ; for who can better judge, what is comely, sober, and modest, than they ?

Phil. But we see some, even of the better sort, in this matter are a little infected, run out, and go beyond their bounds.

Theol. The more is the pity. But alas, we see the sway of the time, and rage of the stream is so violent, that it carrieth before it, whatsoever is not settled, and very deep rooted. And some Godly and well-disposed persons, whose hearts are not with these things, but with God, are notwithstanding perforce carryed away with the violence of the Wind and Tide ; whose case though it cannot well be defended or excused, yet it is to be pitied and lamented.

Phil. Have you any further directions touching this point ?

Theol. There is one thing yet more to be added : to wit, that attire be accordig to mens places, callings, and degrees. For that is not seemly for one, that is seemly for another, that becomes not one mans place, becometh anothers : For that is not meet for poor men, which is meet for rich men : nor that meet for mean men, which is meet for men of more note and great place.

Phil. Then you think it is lawfull for Kings, Princes, and

and great personages to wear pearl, gold, silver, and velvet, &c,

Theol. Questionless it is lawful for such in sober manner and measure to wear the most costly and precious things which the Earth can afford : and that to set out the Magnificence, Pomp, and Glory of their places : and therefore such things are in them most comely and decent.

Phil. But now adays few will keep within compass, few will know their places, but the most part run beyond their bounds, and leap quite out of their sockets,

Theol. True indeed : for now adays, mean Gentlewomen, yea, some Gentlewomen of their own making, will ruffle it, and brave it out in their attire like Countesses and Ladies of honour. Plain folk also in the Country, will flaunt it like Courtiers, and like good Gentlemen and Gentlewomen ; and they seem to say in their hearts, Fie on this plainness, we will have no more of it, we will not take it as we have done : So that now the old Proverb is verified : *Every Jack will be a Gentleman, and Joan is as good as my Lady.* For now we cannot by their apparel, discern the Maid from the Mistress, nor the waiting Gentlewoman from her Lady : And thus we see in this matter of apparel how all is out of joynt.

Phil. Is there any more to be said in this case ?

Theol. There is yet another thing to be respected in this matter of attire.

Phil. What is that ?

Theol. That is to be according to mens abilities. For it is lamentable to consider, how poor men and women, poor hired Servants, Milk-maids, and such like, go quite beyond their abilities. And more lamentable to see what wretched and ill-favoured shifts they make to compass these things : so sharp and so eagerly are they set upon them.

Phil. Well sir, now you have sufficiently rolled the stone, and at large satisfied us touching the matter of Pride ; which is the first sign of condemnation. Now

pro-

proceed to the second, which is whoredom; and unfold unto us out of the Scriptures the danger thereof.

Theol. Solomon in his Proverbs saith, (Prov. 22. 14.) *That the mouth of a strange Woman [or an Harlot] is as a deep pit; he that is a detestation to the Lord shall fall therein.* Wherein he plainly sheweth, that those whom God detesteth, and is exceeding angry with, are given over to this Vice. And in another place he saith, (Prov. 23. 27.) *A whore is a deep ditch, and as a narrow pit.* Noting thereby, that if a man be once fallen in with any Harlot, he shall as hardly get out again, as a man that is plunged into a very deep and narrow pit, where he can scarce stir himself. The same Solomon in the Book of Ecclesiastes yields us the reason hereof, namely, because she is as nets, snares, and bands, wherein if a man be once taken, he is fast enough for getting out. (Eccles. 7. 26.) *I find, saith he, more bitter than death, the woman whose heart is as nets and snares, and her hands as bands. He that is good before God, shall be delivered from her; but the sinner shall be taken by her.* We do therefore plainly see in what a labyrinth and dangerous case they be that are left of God, and given over to Whoredom and Harlots: and therefore it is said, (Prov. 6. 25.) *Desire not her beauty in thine heart, neither let her eye-lids catch thee: for by a whorish woman, a man is brought to a morsel of bread; and the Adulteress hunteth for life which is precious.* And again he saith, (Prov. 5. 3, 4.) *Albeit the lips of an harlot drop as an hony-comb, and the roof of her mouth is softer than Oyl, yet her latter end is as bitter as Wormwood, and as sharp as a two edged Sword.* All these prudent Speeches of the Holy Ghost, do most evidently shew untous what a fearful thing it is to commit whoredom, and so to fall into the hands of Whores and Harlots. Therefore Job saith of the wicked, (Job. 36, 14,) *Their Soul dyeth in youth, and their life among the whoremongers.*

Phil. You have very well shewed out of God's Book, the great danger of Whoredom and Adultery. And it is greatly

greatly to be lamented, that men in this age make so light of it as they do, and that it is so common a vice; no that some (alas with grief I speak it!) do profess it, live by it, and prostitute themselves wholly unto it.

Theol. Such men and Women may justly fear the plaguing hand of God; for the Lord saith by his Prophet; (*Jer. 5. 7.*) Though I fed them to the full yet they committed adultery, and assembled themselves by companies in harlots houses. They rose up in the morning like fed Horses, for every man neighed after his Neighbors Wife. Shall I not visit for these things saith the Lord? shall not my soul be avenged on such a Nation?

Phil. Methinks if men were not altogether hardened in this sin, and even past feeling, and past grace, this threatening and thundring of God himself from Heaven should terrifie them.

Theol. A man would think so indeed: but now we may take up the old complaint of the Prophet, I hearkned and heard, and loe no man spake aright, no man repented him of his evil, saying, What have I done? Every one turneth to their race, as the horse rusheth into the batrel.

Antil. Tush, Whoredom is but a trick of youth, and we see all men have their imperfections.

Theol. You speak prophanelly and wickedly: For shall we count that but a trick of youth, for the which the Lord smote three and twenty thousand of his own people in one day? (*1 Cor. 10. 8.*) Shall we count that but a trick of youth, for the which the Lord threatned David his own Servant, that the Sword should never depart from his house? (*2 Sam. 12. 10.*) Shall we count that a trick of youth, for the which Hamor and Sechem, the Father and the Son, with many other, both men, women, and children were cruelly murdered, by Simeon and Levi, the Sons of Jacob? (*Gen. 34. 25.*) Shall we count that but a trick of youth, for the which the Lord slew Hophni and Phineas, the two Sons of Eli the Priest in the battel of the Philistines?

listines? 1 Sam. 4. 11. Shall we thus set all at six and seven, and make light of such horrible Villanies? Doth not the severity of punishment, shew the greatness of the sin?

Doth not the Apostle say, 1 Cor. 10. 11. *These things came unto them for our examples, upon whom the ends of the world are come?* And you pass it over with a tush, and a trick of youth, as if God were to be dallied with. No, no, be not deceived, God is not mocked. They which will not be moved now in hearing, shall one day be crushed in peices in feeling. And they who now call whoredom a trick of youth, shall one day howl and cry, yell and yelp for such tricks, with wo and alas that ever they were.

Antil. Oh sir, you must bear with youth; youth you know is frail, and youth will be youthful when you have said all you can.

Theol. Yea but God doth allow no more liberty to youth, than unto age: but bindeth all upon pain of death, to the obedience of his Commandements: The Apostle saith, Tit. 2. 6. *Let young men be sober minded.* David saith, Psal. 119. 9. *wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way? in taking heed thereto according to thy word.* The wise man saith, Eccl 12. 1. *Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth: and further addeth, that if they will needs follow their lusts, their Pleasures and their own swing, yet in the end he will bring them to Judgement, arraign them, condemn them, and tame them in hell-fire well enough.*

Phil. Yet we see men are so violently carryed after their lusts, and so desperately bent, that they will have the present sweet and pleasure of sin, come of it what will. Come sickness, come death, come Hell, come damnation, they are at a point; they will pay the highest price for their lust. They will purchase their pleasures with the loss of their souls, O wofull purchase! O damnable pleasures!

Theol. Sweet meat will have sower sauce, and a dram of pleasure a pound of sorrow. Such cursed
caitifs

caitiffs wall at last pay a dear shot for their pleasures. Such desperate wretches shall one day know (to their everlasting wo) what it is to provoke God, and to sin with so high an hand against him. They shall well know in spight of their hearts, that Vengeance is prepared for the wicked, and that there is a God that Judgeth the earth. Let all men therefore take heed in time; for *whoremongers and Adulterers God will judge.* Heb. 13. 4. And the Apostle saith flatly, *That whoremongers and Adulterers shall not inherit the Kingdom of God,* 1 Cor. 6. 9. Let therefore no Fornicator or Unclean person be found among us, as was Esau. Heb. 12, 16. But let us abstain from fleshly lusts, which fight against the Soul, 1 Pet. 2. 11. And let every one know how to possess his vessel in Holiness and Honour, and not in the lust of Concupiscence, as the Gentiles which know not God, 1 Thes. 4. 4.

Herein let us consider the wise speech of an ancient Father: (Chrys. in Mat.) *Sin, while it is in doing minisreth some pleasure; but when it is committed, the short pleasure thereof vanisheth away and long sorrow cometh instead of it.* Neither let us reject the saying of a wise Heachen, (Isocrat. ad demon.) *Shun pleasure for fear of smart. Sower things follow sweet, and joy heaviness.*

Antil. Yet for all this you shall not make me believe, that whoredom is so hainous a matter. You make more of it than it is.

Theol. True indeed: for you and such as you are will believe nothing against your lusts and fleshly delights: and that is the cause why you are so deaf on this ear. I will therefore add a word or two more (out of the Oracles of God) to that which hath been spoken. The wise King saith, *He that committeth Adultery with Women, destroyeth his own soul.* Prov. 6 32. and so is accessary to his own death; which is no small matter. For we use to say, if a man hang himself, or drown himself, or any manner of way make away himself, that he was cursed of God, that Gods hand

was

was heavy against him, that the devil ought him a shame, and now he hath paid him. And all the Country rings of such a strange accident when and where it falleth out: and the Coroner of the Country doth sit upon it. How much more may all the world wonder at this; that a man should destroy his own soul, and wittingly and willingly cast away himself for ever: Now the Holy Ghost saith, The Adulterer doth such an act, giveth such a venture, and willingly murthereth himself. Oh therefore woe unto him that ever he was born! for sure it is, the great Coroner of Heaven, that crowns whom he will crown shall one day sit upon it and give judgement. Moreover as the Adulterer sinneth against his soul, so he also sinneth against his body, after a special manner, as witnesseth the Apostle 1 Cor. 6. 18. Also he sinneth against his goods and outward estate, as the holy man Job testifieth, saying, *Adultery is a fire that devoureth to destruction, and it will root out all our increase.* Job. 31. 12. Furthermore, he sinneth against his name. *For the Adultery shall find a wound, and dishonour; and his reproach shall never be put away.* Prov. 6. 33.

Item, He sinneth against his Wife, who is his companion, and the wife of his covenant: Mat. 2. 14, & 15. And God saith in the same place, *Let none trespass against the Wife of his youth; keep your selves in your spirit, and transgress not.* Last of all, he sinneth against his Children and posterity, as the Lord said to David, *because thou hast despised me, and done this, therefore the sword shall never depart from thy house. Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house,* 2 Sam. 12. 10. Now therefore to conclude this point, we may see how many deadly wounds men make themselves by committing of adultery: They wound themselves in their souls: they wound themselves in their bodies: they wound themselves in their goods: they wound themselves in their names: themselves in their wives, and in their children.

What

What man, except he were stark mad, would thrust in himself in so many places at one time? The Adulterer with his one sin of Adultery, maketh all these deadly Wounds in himself: and it is an hundred to one he will never get them cured, but will dye, and will bleed to death of them. Lo thus you see the dangerous quality and condition of this sin. Shall we now therefore make light of it? Shall we say, it is but a trick of youth? Shall we smooth over the matter with sweet words, when the Holy Ghost maketh it so heinous and capital? Shall we make nothing of that which draweth down Gods wrath upon the soul, body, goods, name, wife and children? That were an intolerable blindness, and most extream hardness of heart. An ancient Writer hath long ago passed sentence upon us, who make so light of this sin: (For saith he) *Adultery is the very hook of the Devil, whereby he draweth us to destruction*, (Basil in Epist.) And another Godly Father saith, *That Adultery is like a furnace, whose mouth is gluttony, the flame pride, the sparkles filthy words, the smoak an ill name, the ashes poverty, and the end shame*, (Gregory) And so we plainly see, that howsoever we regard not this sin, but flatter our selves in it, yet those whose eyes the Lord hath opened, have in all ages condemned it as most flagitious and horrible: yea, the very Heathen will rise up in Judgement against us, who have spoken and written many things against this filthy and beastly Vice.

Phil. Now indeed you have sufficiently branded the vice of Adultery, and laid out the ugliness thereof, that all men may behold it stark naked, and abhor it. If any man (notwithstanding all this) will venture upon it, he may be said to be a most desperate Monster. For what doth he else but (as it were) put his finger into the Lyons mouth, and (as it were) take the bear by the tooth: and they may well know what will follow, and what they may look for. Let all men therefore in time take heed to themselves, and to their own souls, as they will answer it at their uttermost peril, at the dreadful day of Judgement, when the

Secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed. But now one thing resteth; to wit, that you should shew us the special roots and causes of Adultery.

Theol. There be five special causes of it; The first is our natural corruption: For the very spawn and seed of all sin is our corrupt nature: and this of all other is a most inherent sin, as witnesseth the Apostle James, saying, when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin when it is perfected bringeth forth death, *Jam. 1. 15*

The second is gluttony and fulness of bread. For when men have filled their bellies, and crammed their panches as full of good chear, wine, and strong drink as their skins can hold, what are they meet for, or what mind they else, but adultery and uncleanness? And therefore well saith one, *Great nourishment, and gross food is the shop of Lust.* The Heathen Poet could skill to say, *Sine Cerere & Baccho friget Venus, Without meat and drink lust waxeth cold.* And to this effect the wise King saith, (*Prov, 23. 31, and 33.*) that their eyes shall behold strange women, whose hearts are set upon wine and belly-chear. And therefore he adviseth all men, not to look upon the wine when it appeareth red, when it sheweth his colour in the cup, or stirreth very kindly: and that for fear of this after-clap. An ancient Writer saith to the same purpose: [*Gregor. Nazianz.*] *He that delicately pampereth his belly, and yet would overcome the spirit of fornication, is like to him that would quench a flame of fire with oyl.*

Therefore to close up this point, sure it is, though men pray, hear, and read much, and be otherwise, well disposed, yet except they be abstemious in diet, they will be much troubled with Lust.

The third cause of Adultery, is idleness: for when men are lazy, luskish and idle, having nothing to do, they lye wide open to adultery, and lust creepeth in to them. Some Historiographers write the Crab-fish is very desirous to eat Oysters; but because she cannot perforce open them, she watcheth her time when

when they open themselves to the Sun after the tide
and then she putteth in her claw, and pulleth out the
Oyster: Even so Satan watcheth his opportunity
against us, that he may infect and breath into us a
filchy Lust, and adulterous desires, when we lye open
unto him by idleness. Wisely therefore to this point
saith the Greek Poet: *Much rest nourisheth Lust.* And
another Poet [*Hesiodus*] saith:

Quæritur Ægyptus quare sit factus adulter:

In promptu causa est; desidiosus erat.

Sloathful laziness is the cause of adultery. And
therefore another saith, *Eschew idleness, and cut the
very sinews of Lust.* [*Otia si rollas periære Cupidinis
arcus.*]

The fourth cause of Adultery is wanton apparel
which is a minstrelless, that pipes up a dance unto
Whoredom. But of this enough before.

The first and last cause of Adultery, is the hope
of impunity, or escaping of punishment. For many be-
ing blinded and hardened by Satan, think they shall
never be called to any account for it; and because
they can blear the eyes of men, and carry this sin
closely under a cloud, that it shall never come to
light, they think all is safe, and that God seeth them
not. And therefore *Job* saith, *The Eye of the Adulter
waiteth for the twie-light, and saith no Eye shall see me.*
And in another place, *How shall God know? Can he
judge thorow the dark Cloud?* But verily, verily, though
the Adulterer do never so closely and cunningly con-
vey his sin under a Canopy, yet the time will come
when it shall be disclosed to his eternal shame. For
God will bring every work to judgment, with every se-
cret thought, whether it be good or evil. (*Eccles. 12. 14.*)
For he hath set our most secret sins in the sight of his counte-
enance. (*Psal. 90.*) And he will lighten the things that
are hid in darkness, and make the counsels of the heart
manifest. (*1 Cor. 4.*) For this cause *Job* saith, *When
shalt thou see me, thou wilt not purge me from my
sin.* (*Job. 10. 14.*)

Phil. Now you have shewed us the causes of Adultery,
I pray you shew us the remedies,

Theol. There be six remedies for adultery, which
I doubt will greatly prevail, if they be well practi-
sed.

Phil Which be they?

Theol. 1. Labour. 2. Abstinence 3. Temperance.
Prayers. 5. Restraint of our Sences. 6. Shunning
Womens Company, and all occasions whatsoever.

Phil. Well sir, now you have waded deep enough in the
second sign of damnation; I pray you let us proceed to the
third, which is Covetousness. And as you have laid na-
ked the two former, so I pray you, strip this stark naked
one, that all men may see what an ugly Monster it is,
and therefore hate it and abhor it.

Theol. I would willingly satisfie your mind; but in
this point I shall never do it sufficiently. For no heart
can conceive, nor tongue sufficiently utter the loath-
some-ness of this Vice; for Covetousness is the foulest
and blackest Devil of all the rest. It is even the
chiefest Belzebub himself. Therefore I shall never be able
fully to describe it unto you: but I will do what I can
to strip and whip it stark naked. And howsoever the
children of this Earth, and blind worldlings take it to be
the sweetest, beautiful and amiable, and therefore do
embrace it, entertain it, and welcome it, as though
there were some happiness in it: yet I hope when I
have shewed them the face thereof in a glass (even the
glass of God's Word) they will be no more in
its love, but quite out of conceit with it. I will
therefore hold out this glass unto them.

St. Paul to Timothy, brandeth this sin in the fore-
head, and boareth it in the ears, that all men may
know it and avoid it, when he saith, Covetousness is
the root of all evil. (1 Tim. 6. 10.) Our Lord Jesus also,
teacheth us a watch-word to take heed of it, saying
Take heed and beware of Covetousness. (Luk. 12. 15)
If he should say; touch it not, come not near it;
it is the very breath of the Devil; it is present death
the very Rats-bane of the Soul. The Apostle

layeth out the great danger of this sin, and doth exceedingly grind the face of it, when he saith, *the end of all such as mind earthly things is damnation* (Phil. 3. 19.) Let all carnal worldlings and much minded men lay this to heart, and consider well it, lest they say one day, Had I wist.

Phil. Good Sir, lay open unto us the true nature of covetousness, and what it is, that we may more perfectly discern it.

Theol. Covetousness is an immoderate desire of living.

Phil. I hope you do not think frugality, thriftiness, good husbandry, to be covetousness.

Theol. Nothing less: for they be things commended; being done in the fear of God, and with a good Conscience.

Phil. Do you not think it lawful also for men to do worldly business, and to use faithfulness and diligence in their callings, that they may provide for themselves and their families?

Theol. Yes no doubt; and the rather, if they use these things with calling upon God for a blessing in the works of their hands, and use Prayer and Thanksgiving before and after their labour, taking heed of the day long of the common corruptions of the world as swearing, cursing, lying, dissembling, deceiving, greedy getting, &c.

Phil. Wherein I pray you doth Covetousness especially consist?

Theol. In the greedy desire of the mind. For we may lawfully do the works of our Calling, and be good Husbands and good House-wives: but we must take heed that distrustfulness and inward covetousness of the world do not catch our hearts. For we are set on fire, and utterly undone.

Phil. Sith Covetousness is especially of the heart, may we know certainly when the heart is infected?

Theol. There be four special signs of the heart's infection.

Phil. Which be they.

Theol. The first is an eager and sharp-set desire of getting. Therefore the Holy Ghost saith, *He that hath to be rich shall not be unpunished.* (Prov. 28. 22.) And again, *An heritage is hastily gotten at the beginning: but the end thereof shall not be blessed.* (Prov. 20. 1.) The Heathen man also saith, [Dem. in Olin. 2.]. *No man can be both justly and hastily rich.*

The second is a pinching and niggardly keeping of our own: that is, when men (being able to give) will hardly part with any thing, though it be to never so holy and good use. And when at last, with much ado, or shame they give something, it cometh heavily from them (God wot) and scantily.

The Third is the neglect of holy duties. that is, when mens minds are so taken up with the love of earthly things, that they begin to slack and cool in matters of God's Worship.

The fourth and last is a trusting in riches, and staying upon them, as though our lives were maintained by them, or did consist only in them: which thing our Lord Jesus flatly denyeth, saying, *Though a man have abundance, yet his life consisteth not in the things that he hath.* (Luk. 12. 13.)

These then are four evident signs and tokens whereby we may certainly discern that mens hearts and entrails are infected with covetousness.

Phil. You have very well satisfied us in this point, Now let us understand the original causes of Covetousness.

Theol. There be two special causes of Covetousness: The one is the ignorance and distrust of God's Providence.

The other is the want of tasting and feeling of Heavenly things. For till men tast better things, they will make much of these: till they feel Heaven, they will love Earth; till they be religious, they will be covetous. Therefore the cause is soon espyed, why men are so sharp set upon these outward things, and do so admire riches, worldly pomp, pleasures, and treasures: Because they know no better, they never had taste nor feeling of those things which are eternal:

Phil. Now as you have shewed us the causes of covetousness, so let us also hear of the effects.

Theol. V Well, then will I briefly dispatch them in order. And first of all, I reason from the words of the Apostle before alledged, that if Covetousness and the love of money be the root of all evil, then it is the root of idolatry, the root of murther, the root of theft, the root of lying, the root of swearing, the root of simony, the root of bribery, the root of usury, the root of Lawing, the root of all contentions in the Church, and the root of all babling and brawling in the Commonwealth. Moreover, it spreadeth far and reacheth wide: it dwelleth in every House, in every Town, in every City: it pryeth into every corner, it creepeth into every heart: it annoyeth our Physicians, it infecteth our Divines, it choaketh our Lawyers, it woundeth our Farmers, it baneth our Gentlemen, it murdereth our Tradesmen, it bewitcheth our Merchants, it stingeth our Marriners, O Covetousness, O Covetousness! It is the poyson of all things, the wound of Christianity, the bane of all goodness. For Covetousness marrs all; it marreth all every where, in all places, in all degrees, among all persons. It marreth marriages; for it coupleth young to old, and old to young. It marreth Hospitality, it marreth all good House keeping, it marreth Alm-deeds, it marreth Religion, it marreth Professors, it marreth Ministers, it marreth Magistrates, it marreth all things. And therefore what sin so grievous, what evil so odious, what Vice so enormous as this? For this cause it was prettily said of one, That all other Vices are but Factors for Covetousness, and serve for Porters to fetch and bring in her living. She maketh simony her drudg, bribery her drudg, usury her drudge, deceit her drudge, swearing her drudge, lying her drudge. O what a Devil incarnate is this, that setteth so many Vices a work, and hath so many Factors and underlings to serve her turn! And are they not in a pretty case think you, that are infected with this sin? O they are in a most miserable case. It had been good for

they had never been born. For being alive, they are dead; I mean in their Souls. For covetousness is Souls poyson, and Souls bane. Covetousness is the strongest poyson to the Soul that is. It is a confection of all the Spiders, Toads, Snakes, adders, Scorpions, Basilisks, and all other the most Venemous Vermin of the whole world. If the devil can get us to take down but one penny weight of it, it is enough. He desires no more, for presently we fall down stark dead; therefore the Apostle saith, *They that will be rich* (he meaneth in all haste, by hook or by crook) *shall into temptations, and snares, and into many foolish and noysome lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.* 1 Tim. 6. 9. For as Covetousness is rank poyson to the Soul: so the Apostle compareth it to a deep gulf, wherein thousands are drowned. And therefore he addeth in the same place. *But thou, O man of God, flee these things.* In which Words he doth most gravely advise all the Ministers of the Word of God to take heed of it. For as it is dangerous in all men: so it is most dangerous and offensive in many Preachers of the Gospel.

Phil. *Indeed it must needs be granted, that covetousness is a very grievous sin: yea, even a Minister with seven heads. Yet for all that, we see in this our Iron Age, how many of all sorts are infected with it, and few will give any thing to an holy use. Most men now adays have nothing to spare for Christ, nothing for his Gospel, nothing for his Church, nothing for the poor Children of God, and needy members of Christ. Christ is little beholding unto them; for they will do nothing for him, nor act so much as speake a good word in his cause, or the cause of his poor Saints. Every little thing with them is too much for God, and good men. For when they come to giving unto holy and necessary Uses, then they will stick at a penny, and grudge at a Groat, and every thing is too much: But to bestow upon themselves, nothing is too much. Nothing is too much for lust, for pleasure, for back, for belly, building, for cards and dice, for whores and charlots, for rioting and revelling, for taverns and brothel houses.*

houses. Hundreds and thousands are little enough, and too little for their expences this way. It is lamentable to consider what masses of money are spent and bestowed upon these things. But alas, alas, how heavy an account are they to make in the day of the Lord, which spend their Lands, Livings and revenues! I quake to think what shall become of them at last. It were well for them, if they might be in no worse case than a Crocodile or a Cur-dog.

Theol. It is most certain that you say: and we have great cause to lament it, and to take up the complaint of the Prophet Jeremiah, saying, From the least of them, even unto the greatest of them, every one is given unto covetousness: and from the Prophet even unto the Priests, they all deal falsely. And another Prophet saith, They build up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity. Mic. 3. 10. The heads thereof Judge for rewards, and the Priests thereof teach for hire, and the Prophets thereof prophesie for money: yet will they lie upon the Lord, and say, Is not the Lord amongst us? No evil can come unto us. But these holy Prophets and men of God do fully describe unto us the state of our time; wherein, though all be corrupted; yet we bear our selves stoutly upon God, we presume of his favour, because of our outward profession, and say of our hearts. No evil can come unto us.

Asun. You say very true Sir, The world was never set upon covetousness, and men were never so greedily given to the world, as now adaies. And yet (in truth) there is no cause why men should be so sharp set upon this world. For this world is but vanity: and all is but pelf and trash. Fie on this muck.

Phil. Many such men as you are, can skill to give good words, and say, Fie on this world, all is but vanity, and yet for all that, in your daily practise, you are nevertheless set upon the world, nor never the more seek after God. You hear the Word of God no whit the more, you read no whit the more, you pray never the more, which evidently sheweth, That all your fair speeches and protestations are nought else but hypocrysie and leazing. Your heart is not with God,

Altho' All is but words, there is no such feeling in the heart, and therefore I may justly say to you as God himself said to his people, This people have said well, all that they have said. Deut. 5. 29. Oh, that there were a heart in them to fear me, and keep my Commandments !

Theol. His words indeed are good, if his heart were according. For all things considered, there is no cause why men should be so given to this world, for they must leave it, when they have done all that they can. As we say, To day a man, to morrow none. And as the Apostle saith, 1 Tim. 6. We brought nothing into this world; and it is certain we shall carry nothing out. We must all die, we know not how soon: why therefore should men set their hearts upon such uncertainties, and deceivable things, for all things in this world are more light than a feather, more brittle than glasse, more fleeting than a shadow, more vanishing then smoak, more unconstant than the Wind: Doubtless, saith the Prophet David, man walketh in a shadow, and disquieteth himself in vain, he heapeth up riches, and cannot tell who shall gather them. Psal. 39. 6. I wonder therefore that these Moles and muck worms of this earth should so mind these shadowish things, and so dote on them as they do. If they were not altogether hardned and blinded by the Devil, they would not be so nearly knit to the clod, and the penny, as they are; thinking and always imagining, that there is no happiness but in those things which are but dung and dross: and at last they will give us the slip, when we think our selves most sure of them.

The wise King, who had the greatest experience of those things that ever man had, for he enjoyed whatsoever this world could afford, upward and downward, backward and forward, yet could he find nothing in them but Vanity and vexation of Spirit. Moreover, he flatly avoucheth, That all these things, riches, wealth, honour, pleasures and treasures, will most notably deceive us in the end, give us the slip,

and be gone. For he compareth riches and all the glory of the world to an Eagle or Hawke, which man holdeth upon his fist, stroketh her, maketh much of her, taketh great delight and pleasure in her, and faith, he will not take ten pounds for her; yet all the sudden she taketh her flight, and flyeth up into the air, and he never seeth her more, nor she him. The words of the Holy Ghost are these, *Wilt thou cause thine eyes to fly after them, (meaning riches)? Thou mayst; but they will not be found. For they will make thee thyself wings like to the Eagle, which flieth up to Heaven.* From thence we may learn, that though we set our heart never so much on any thing here below, yet at the last it shall be taken from us, or we from it. Therefore all worldly men do but weave the spiders webs, and may fitly be compared to the silly spider, which toyleth her self, and laboureth all the week long to finish up her web, that she might lodge her self in it as in her own house, and freehold. But alas! at the weeks end, a Maid, in a moment, with one brush of the broom, dispossesseth her of her inheritance, which she had purchased with great labour and much ado? Even so, when the men of this world have with much care and travel, purchased great Lands and Revenues, and gathered all that they can; yet all the sudden, death (with one stroke of his deadly dart) will make them give up the Ghost, and then where are they? It was prettily therefore said of a man in the light of nature (Seneca) *No man hath ever lived so happily in this life, but in his life time many things have befallen him, for the which he hath wished rather to die than to live.* And assuredly I think there was never any man lived any one day upon the face of the earth, but some grief or other either did, or justly might invade his mind ere night; either in the temptation of the World, the flesh, or the Devil; or in regard of Soul, Body, Goods or Name; in regard of Wife, Children, Friends or Neighbours; in regard of Dangers to Prince, State, Church or Commonwealth; in regard of Casualties, and loss by

Water, by Fire, by Sea or Land, VVhat a life therefore is this, that hath not one good day in it? who would desire to dwell long in it? For it layeth open every day manifold Miseries Dangers, Losses, Casualties, Reproaches, Shame, Infamy, Poverty, Sickness, Diseases, Cholicks, Agues, Tooth-ache, Head-ache, Back-ache, Bone-ache, and a thousand Calamities. Phil. *You have very well described unto us, the vanity of this life, and that no day is free from one sorrow or other; one grief or other; the which thing our Lord Jesus ratifieth in the reason which he bringeth why men should not distrustfully care for to morrow. For, saith he, sufficient to the day is the evil thereof; Or, as some read it, The day hath enough with his own grief. Wherein he doth plainly shew that every day hath his sorrow. his evil, his grief, and his thwart. But, I pray you, proceed further in this point.*

Thecl. This I say further; That when men have winked and swear, carked and cared, moiled and runnoiled, drudged and droiled by night and by day, by sea and by land, with much care and sorrow, much labour and grief, to rake together the things of this life; yet at last all will away again, and we must end where we began. For as Job said, *Naked we came into the world, and naked we must go out. Job 1.* For even as a VVind-mill beateh it self, maketh a great noise, whistleth and whisketh about, from day to day all the year long, yet at the years end standeth still where it began, being not moved one foot backward or forward: so when men have blustered and blown all that they can, and have even run themselves out of breath to scrape up the commodities of the earth, yet at last they must (in spite of their beards) end where they began; end with nothing, as they begun with nothing; end with a winding sheet, as they begun with swaddling cloths. For what is become of the greatest Monarchs, Kings, Princes, Potentates and Magnificents that ever the VVorld had? where is *Cyrus, Darius Xerxes, Alexander, Caesar, Pompey, Scipio and Hannibal?* where are the Valiant *Henries*, and Noble *Edwards* of

England? Are they not all gone down to the house of oblivion? Are they not all returned to their dust, and their thoughts perish? Though they were as Gods, yet have they dyed as men, and are fallen like others. Who now careth for them? who talketh of them? who feareth them? who regardeth them? do not beggars tread upon them? Yet while they lived, they were the Lords of the world; they were as terrible as Lyons, fearful to all men, full of Pomp and Glory, Dignity and Majesty. They plowed up all things, they bear all before them, and who but they? But now they have given up the Ghost, *Job 30. 23. and are (as Job saith) gone down to the House appointed for all the living.* Their pomp is descended with them, and all their glory is buried in the ashes. They are now covered under a cloud, cast out into a Vault, made companions to roads, and the worms do eat them; and what is become of their souls, is most of all to be feared.

Thus we see how all flesh doth but make a Vain shew for a while upon this Theatre of misery, fetching a compass about, and is presently gone. For, as the Poet saith, *Serius aut cibus sedem properamus ad unum* first or last we must all to the grave.

- *Asun.* You have made a very good speech, it doth me good to hear it. I wonder all these things considered, the men should be so wholly given up to this world, as they are. I think the Devil hath bewitched them; for they shall carry nothing with them when they die, but their good deeds, and their ill.

Theol. The drudges and snudges of this world, may very fitly be compared to a Kings Sumpter-horse, which goeth laden all the day long with as much Gold and Treasure as he can bear, but at night his treasure is taken from him; and he is turned into a sorry dirty stable, and hath nothing left him but his galled back. Even so the rich Cormorants and Caterpillars of the earth, which here have treasured and hoorded up great heaps of gold and silver, (with the which they travel laden thorow this World) shall in the end be stripped out of all, let down into their grave, and have no

thing left them, but their galled consciences, with the which they shall be tumbled down into the dungeon of eternal darkness.

Phil. Wherein doth the sting and strength of this world especially consist?

Theol. Even as the great strength of *Sampson* lay in his hair, so the great strength of the world lyeth in her two breasts, the one of pleasure, the other of profit. For she like a notable Strumpet, by laying out of these her breasts, doth bewitch the Sons of men, and allureth thousands to her lust. For if she cannot win them with the one breast, yet she gaineth them with the other; if not with pleasure, then with profit; if not with profit, then with pleasure. He is an odd man of a thousand that sucketh not of the one breast or the other. But sure it is, which soever he sucketh, he shall be poysoned; for she giveth none other milk but rank poyson. The world therefore is like an alluring *Jaël*, (*Judg 4 21.*) which sitteth at her door to entice us to come in, and eat of the milk of her pleasures; but when she hath once got us in, she is ready (even while we are eating) with her hammer and her nail to pierce thorow our brains.

Phil. I see plainly, this world is a very strumpet, a strong bait, and a snaring net, wherein thousands are taken. It is very birdlime, which doth so belime our affections, that they cannot ascend upward. It is like the weights of a clock, hang'd upon our soul, which draw them down to the earth; it naileth us fast down to the ground: it mortereth us into clay: it maketh us abominable unto God. For I remember God made a law, Lev 11. That whosoever goeth with his breast upon the ground, should be abominable unto us. How much more these carnal worldings, which are fast sodered to the earth?

Theol. The Apostle *Saint James*, seeing into the deep wickedness of this World, and knowing right well how odious it maketh us in the sight of God, cryeth out against it, terming it Adultery, and all worldlings, adulterers, because they forsake Christ their true Husband, and whorishly give their hearts to this World.

O ye Adulterers, and adulteresses (*Jan. 4*) saith he, know ye not that the enmity of this world is the enmity of God? Whosoever therefore will be made a friend to this world makes himself the enemy of God. And who dares stand forth and say, I will be the enemy of God? Who therefore dares be a worldling? for every worldling is the enemy of God: what then will become of you, ye wicked worldlings?

Phil. It appeareth then plainly by the Scriptures that the excessive love of this world, and unsatiable desire having, is a most dangerous thing, and men do they know not what in seeking so greedily after it.

Theol. The Heathen man will rise up in judgement against us; for he saith, (*Soph.*) Unsatiableness is the vilest evil amongst mortal men. But many of our Segulfs and Whirl-pools make no conscience of it. They think it is no sin, they devour and swallow up all, and yet are never satisfied: they will have all, and more than all, and the Devil and all. The whole World cannot satisfie their mind, but God must create new worlds to content them. These men are sick of the gold n dropie; the more they have, the more they desire. The love of money increaseth, as money itself increaseth. But the Scripture saith, (*Eccles. 5. 10.*) He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver. Of therefore that we should strive earnestly to get out of this gulf of hell, and tread the Moyn (that is all worldly things) under our feet. (*Apoc. 12. 1.*) as it is spoken of the Church: and that we would set our affections on the things that are above, and not on the things that are beneath: that we would flie an high pitch, and soar aloft as the Eagles, looking down at this world, and all things in it, as at our feet; concerning it, and treading the very glory of it under our feet, that it may never have more power over us.

Phil. O happy, and twice happy are they that can do so! and I beseech the Almighty God to give us his holy Spirit, whereby we may be carryed above this world, into

the Mountains of Spices. For, how happy a thing is it to have our conversation in Heaven ! that is to have an inward conversation with God, by much prayer, reading, meditation, and heavenly affections, This indeed is to climbe up above the world, and to converse in the chambers of peace. O therefore that we would seriously and thoroughly conceive and consider of this world as it is ! that we would well weigh the vanity of it, and the excellency of that which is to come ; that so we might loath the one, and love the other ; despise the one and embrace the other ; love God more than ever we did ; and this world less ! For what is this world but vanity of vanities ?

Antil. You do so exceedingly abase that which some make their God. You speak contemptuously, of that which most men have in greatest price and admiration. You disgrace that which multitudes would Grace. You make light of that which numbers make greatest account of. Let us therefore hear your Reasons. Shew us more fully what it is ; describe it unto us.

Theol. The world is a sea of glass, a pageant of fond delights, a Theatre of vanity, a Labyrinth of errour, a Gulf of grief, a Sty of filthiness, a Vale of misery, a spectacle of woe, a river of tears, a Stage of deceit, a Cage full of Owls, a den of Scorpions, a wilderness of VVolves, a Cabin of Bears, a whirl-winde of passions, a feigned Comedy, a delectable phrensie, where is false delight, assured grief, certain sorrow, uncertain pleasure, lasting wo, fickle worth, long heaviness, short joy.

Phil. Now you have indeed described it to the full, and laid it out (as it were) in Orient colours. And a man would think he were bewitched or stark mad, which hereafter should set his mind on it. But yet I am desirous to hear a little more of that which I asked you before : wherein the strength and poyson of the world doth especially consist ?

Theol. In this lyeth a great strength of the world, that it draweth down the stars of heaven, and maketh them fall to the earth, as it is said of the Dragons (tail ;

tail; which is ambition, covetousness, and the love of this world. (*Rev. 12.*) For we may wonder and lament, to see how the love of these things hath wounded and overborn many excellent Servants of God, both Preachers and Professors of the Gospel: which thing doth plainly argue the strength of it, for it is the strongest, and the very last Engine that Satan useth to impugne us withal when none other will prevail: For when no temptation could fasten upon Christ, he bringeth forth this last weapon, which never faileth, *All these things will I give thee*; (*Mat. 4.*) shewing him the glory of the whole world. So then, he (having experience in this, that it never faileth) thought to have overcome Christ himself with it. Here therefore lyeth the very sting and strength of the World and the Devil: for whom hath he not taken with, *All these things will I give thee*? Whom hath he not wounded? Whom hath he not deceived? Whom hath he not overthrown? With this he enticed *Balaams*: with this he beguiled *Achan*: with this he overthrew *Judas*: with this he bewitched *Demas*: with this in these our days he deceived many of excellent gifts. For assuredly he is a *Phenix* amongst men, which is not overcome with this. He is a wonderment of the World that is not moved with mony.

Phil. I am now fully satisfied for this matter. But one thing cometh often into my mind; to wit, that these miserable worldlings can have no sound comfort in their pleasures and profits, because they have no comfort in God, nor peace in their own Consciences.

Theol. You say very true. It is impossible that men loving this world, should have any sound comfort in God: For no man can serve two Masters, both God and riches: Their case therefore is very dangerous and fearful, though they never see it nor feel it; as I will shew you by a plain example: Suppose one of these great rich worldlings should be cloathed in Velvet, and cloath of Gold, in most stately manner, and also should be set at his Table,

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furnished with all the dainties of the world, should be attended and waited upon by many in most lordly and pompous manner, should sit in his goodly dining chamber, all glittering like Gold; should have his first, second, and third service served in with minstrels and instruments of Musick in most Royal sort, he sitting in his chair like a King in his Throne; yet for all this, if a dagger should be held to his heart all this while, ready to stab him, what pleasure, what joy, what comfort could he have in all the rest? Even so whatsoever pomp and pleasures wicked worldlings have here below, yet their guilty and hellish Conscience is as it were a dagger held alwaies hard to their heart, so as they can have no sound comfort in any thing. Or let me give it you thus: Put case a man hath committed high treason, and were therefore apprehended, arraigned and condemned to be hanged, drawn, and quartered; what then can comfort a man in this case? can mirth, can musick, can gold, can silver, can livings, can Lands? No, no, none of all these can help him, or give him any comfort: For the continual thoughts of death do so gripe him at the heart, that none of all these can do him any good, or any whit mitigate his grief. What then is the thing that can comfort him in this case? Only a pardon sealed with the Kings broad Seal, and subscribed with his own hand. For as soon as he hath got this, his heavy heart reviveth, and leapeth for joy. This then assuredly is the very case of all profane Atheists and Worldlings, who are not assured of the King of Heaven his pardon for their sin: and then, what joy can they have either in their meat, drink, goods, cattel, wives, children, lands, revenues, or any thing whatsoever? For the dreadful thoughts of Hell do oftentimes crosse them inwardly and quite damp and dash all their mirth, their own Consciences will not be stilled, but in most terrible manner rise up, and give evidence against them, telling them flatly they shall be damned, how merry and jocund soever they seem to be in this world, setting a good face on
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the matter. For sure it is, that inwardly they have many a cold pull, and many heart gripes. And all their mirth and jollity is but a giggling from the teeth outward, they can have no sound comfort within; And therefore the wise King saith, *Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful, and the end of that mirth is heaviness.* Likewise saith the holy man *Job, Terroures of Conscience come upon the wicked man like water: in the night a Whirl-wind carrieth him away secretly.* Eliphas the Temanite avoucheth the same point, saying, *The wicked man is continually as one that travelleth with child: a sound of fear is in his ears, &c.* Thus then we see, that howsoever many carnal Atheists, and ungodly persons seem outwardly to float aloft in all mirth and jollity, bearing it out (as we say) at the breast: yet inwardly are they pinched with terroures, and most horrible convulsions of Conscience.

Antil. You have spoken many things very sharply against covetousness; but in my mind, so long as a man covets nothing but his own, he cannot be said to be covetous.

Theol. Yes that he may. For not only is he covetous, which greedily desireth other mens goods, but even he also which over-niggardly and pinchingly holdeth fast his own, and is such a miser, that he will part with nothing. We see the world is full of such pinch-pennies, that will let nothing go, except it be wrung from them perforce, as a key out of *Hercule's* hand.

The grapple muck-rakers had a leewe part with their blood, as their goods. They will pinch their own backs and bellies, to get their God into their chests, and when they have once got him there, will they easily part with him, trow ye? No, no: a man will part with his God for no man's pleasure. He will eat pease bread, and drink small drink, rather than he will diminish his God. Therefore the Scripture saith, *Eat not the meat of him that hath an evil eye, and desire not his dainty dishes.* For as he grudgeth his own Soul, so will he say unto thee, *Eat and Drink, when his heart is not with thee. Thou shalt vomit thy morsels*

which

which thou hast eaten, and lose thy pleasant speeches. (Prov. 23. 6.) The old saying is, The Covetous man wanteth as well that which he hath, as that which he hath not, because he hath no use of that which he hath. So then you see, there is a great strength of covetousness in the niggardly keeping of our own.

Antil. Yet for all this, men must follow their worldly business, and lay up to live. For it is an hard world, and goods are not easie to come by. Therefore men must ply their business, or else they may go beg and starve.

Theol. I deny not but that you may follow the works of your calling diligently, so it be in the fear of God, and with a good conscience, as I told you before : but this greediness, and 'grippleness God doth condemn, and also this excessive love of money.

Antil. Believe me, I know no body that hates it ; I cannot see but that all men love gold and silver.

Theol. It is one thing to use these things, and another thing to love them, and set our hearts upon them. For the Scripture saith, If riches encrease, set not your hearts upon them. Saint John also saith, Love not this world, nor the things that are in this world. (1 Job. 2.) He saith not, Use not this world ; but, Love not this world : for use it we may ; love it we may not. Therefore the Apostle saith, that, They which use this world, should be as though they used it not. Where he alloweth a sober and moderate use of the things of this life in the fear of God. We must use this world for necessities sake, as we use meat and drink ; taking no more of this world than need must for fear of surfeiting. The Holy Ghost saith, Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with things present (Heb. 13. 5.) Happy is that man therefore that is well content with his present estate whatsoever, and carrieth himself moderately and comfortably therein. For the SPIRIT saith, There is no profit to a man under the Sun, but that he eat, drink, and delight his soul with the profit of his labours. I saw also this, that this is the hand of God. (Eccles. 2. 24.) In words, the prudent King saith thus much in effect : That this is

is all the good we can attain unto in this world, even to make a sober and comfortable use of the things of this life which God bestoweth upon us. And further he avoucheth, *That thus to use them aright, and with a sound comfort, is a very rare gift of God.* (Eccles. 18, 19.) For, as one [Greg. Nazia.] saith, he is a wise man, that is not grieved for the things which he hath not; but doth rejoyce in the the things which he hath, using them to God's glory and his own comfort. So then conclude this point, and return to you an answer thus: That we may in sober and Godly manner, use Gold, Silver, and the things of this life: but at no hand to overlove them, or give our hearts unto them.

Antil. Well; yet for all this I cannot see but that these Preachers and Professors, these learned men and precise fellows, are even as eager of the world, and as covetous as any other.

Theol. Now you shew your venemous spirit against better men than your self. And I have a four-fold answer for you. First, I answer, that although godly men may be somewhat overtaken this way, and overcome spirit a little, yet they break not out so grossly as others. Secondly, if God leave them sometimes to be overcome of the world, yet he, in his great wisdom and mercy, turneth it to their good. For thereby he first humbleth them, and afterwards raiseth them up again. And so all things work together for good to them that love God, (Rom. 8.) Thirdly, I answer, we must live by Rules, and not by Examples. For even the best of God's people have had their wants and weaknesses. Therefore we may not frame rules to live by out of the infirmities of the most excellent Servants of God. Wicked therefore and impious is their allegation, who alledge David's Adultery, Lot's drunkenness, Peter's fall, Abraham's slips, Solomons weakness &c. for a shelter, and defence of themselves in like sins: Lastly, I answer, that you greatly wound your self in your own speech; so far off are you from mending your market any whit thereby. For Preachers and other Godly men (after many prayers

ears, and much means used) cannot escape scot-free, but sometimes are wounded, and almost overthrown by the world and the Devil ; what then shall become of you, which use no means at all, nor any gain-striving, but willingly give place to the Devil. If the Devil did over-master *David, Lot, Sampson, Solomon*, and other such excellent Worthies ; alas ! what shall become of meer Worldlings and Atheists ? If the most valiant men, and cheif Captains in a battle go down, what shall become of the faint-hearted Souldiers ? And as *St. Peter* saith, *if the righteous scarce be saved, where shall the wicked and ungodly appear ?* (1 Pet. 4. 18.) So then I take you at the rebound, and return your own weapon upon your self ; that sith godly men cannot escape through this world without blows, what shall become of them that know not what godliness meaneth ?

Antil. Yet I say once again that men must live, men must lay up for this world : we cannot live by the Scripture, and as for that which you call covetousness, it is but good Husbandry.

Theol. I thought we should have it at last. Now you have paid it home : you are come to the old byas, and as a hare to her old form ; and her old covert. For this is the very covert and thicket of the world wherein they would hide covetousness : but I will do what I can to hunt you out of it by the Scriptures.

First *Solomon* saith, *He that spareth more than is right, shall surely come to poverty.* (Prov. 11. 24.) So then you see, that covetousness bringeth forth poverty. Thus therefore I reason : That which bringeth poverty is no good Husbandry : but covetousness and too much sparing bringeth poverty ; therefore it is no good husbandry. The same *Solomon* saith, *He that is givento gain, troubleth his own house.* That is, the covetous man is an occasion of many evils in his estate and Family. From Scripture I do thus reason ; That which troubleth a mans house is no good Husbandry ; but covetousness troubleth a mans house ; therefore it is no good husbandry. Last of all, the old

Pro-

Proverb saith, *Covetousness bringeth nothing home* and therefore it is no good husbandry. For oftentimes we see, that men for Covetousness of more lose that which otherwise they might have had. Of the wise Heathen saith, *Evil gain is a bad loss*. *Hesiodus*. But the Covetous man doth seek after wicked gain, and therefore seeketh loss; and consequently is no good Husband. Another saith, *Unjust gain bringeth forth loss and misery*. (*Phocilides*.) And therefore its far enough from Vertue, and all good Husbandry. Thus then I hope you are so hunted down by God and men, that this covert cannot hide you. And therefore you must out of it, and seek some other shelter: for this will not serve your turn.

Phil. Now I must needs say you have fully stopped my mouth, and thoroughly ferreted him out of his deep burrow. And it is most certain that you say, that the wise-Heathen hath condemned covetousnesse and all unjust gains which we both practise and defend: and therefore shall they rise up in judgment against us. But now let us leave this caviller, and proceed in our matters. There is one thing yet remaining, wherein I desire to be satisfied.

Theol. What is that!

Phil. I would gladly know which be the special remedies against covetousness.

Theol. There be two special remedies against covetousness: to wit, contentation, and the mediation of Gods Providence.

Phil. Let us hear somewhat of contentation out of the Scriptures.

Theol. The Apostle saith, having food and raiment we must therewith be content, 1 Tim. 6. 8. For we have brought nothing into this world; and it is certain we shall carry nothing out, Heb. 13. 5. The Spirit also saith, Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with your present State. - Again, the Apostle saith, He had learned in whatsoever state he was, therewith to be content. Phil. 4. 11. Note, that he saith, he had learned; For he had it not of himself. For contentation is the singular gift of God: as it is written

The righteous eateth to the contentation of his Soul: but the belly of the wicked shall want. Prov. 13. 25. An ancient Father saith, (Cyril. in Joan 12.) We ought to accustom our selves to live of a little, and to be content, that we may do no wicked or filthy thing for lucre's sake. Another saith, (Chrys. hom. 51.) He is not poor that hath nothing, but he that desireth much. Neither is he rich that hath much, but he that wanteth nothing: for contentation never wanteth. There is no grief in lacking. And where there is immoderate desire of having; if we will live after Nature, we shall never be poor: if after our own appetite, we shall never be rich. Well therefore saith the Poet, (Eurip.) Wax not rich unjustly, but justly: Be content with thine own things, abstain from other mens. Thus then we see, that both God himself (the fountain of all wisdom) and men also; both in the state of nature and grace, do all joyntly advise us to strive for contentation: and then we shall have sovereign remedy against Covetousness. Phil. Let us hear somewhat of the second remedy against Covetousness.

Theol. An earnest thinking upon the Providence of God is a present remedy against the most foolish and pining carefulness of men for this life. For if we would seriously weigh, and deeply consider the provident care that God hath had for his children in all ages, touching food and rayment, and how strangely he hath provided for them; it might suffice to correct this evil in us, and minister unto us a notable preservative against Covetousness.

We read how wonderfully the Lord did provide for his Prophet *Elijah* in the time of the great dearth and drought that was in *Israel*. Did not the Lord command the Ravens to feed him by the River *Cherith*, 1 Kings 17. Did not the Ravens bring him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening, and he drank of the River?

What should I speak, how miraculously God provided for *Hagar* and her Infant, Gen. 21. 19. when they were both cast out of *Abrahams* house, and brought

brought to great extremity; even both of them ready to give up the Ghost for want of food.

Did not God help at a pinch, as his manner hath alwaies been? *Exod.* 15. 5. Did he not send his Angels unto them, and both comfort them, and provide for them? What should I speak how strangely God provided for his Church in the Wilderness? *Exod.* 16. Did he not feed them with *Manna* from Heaven, and gave them Water to drink out of a Rock, *Psal.* 78. Hath not our Heavenly Father made many royal and large promises, that he will provide necessaries for his children? Shall we not think that he will perform as good as his word? doth he not say, *The Lord will not lack and suffer hunger, but they that ask him shall want nothing that is good?* *Psal.* 34. 10. Doth he not say, *Fear him all ye his Saints, for nothing is wanting to them that fear him?* *Psal.* 84. 11. Doth he not say, *A good thing shall be withheld from them that walk uprightly?* *Mat.* 6. 33. Doth he not say, *Our heavenly Father knoweth that we have need of these things, and that these things shall be cast upon us, if we earnestly seek his Kingdom?* Did he not bid us, *Cast all your care upon him, for he careth for us?* *1 Pet.* 5. 7. Doth he not bid us, *Take no thought what we shall eat, or what we shall drink, or wherewith we shall be clothed?* *Luke.* 12. Meaning thereby no distracting or distrustful thoughts. Doth he not say, *He will not leave us nor forsake us?* *Heb.* 13. 5. Doth he not say, *The Lord is at hand, in nothing be careful?* *Phil.* 4. 5. Are not these large promises sufficient to stay up our faith in God's providence? Shall we think God jesteth with us? Shall we think he meaneth no such matter? Shall we imagine he will not keep touch? Oh it were blasphemy once to think it. For God is true, and all men liars: He is faithful that hath promised. His word is more than the faith of a Prince; more than a thousand Obligations. Why do we not rest upon his word? why go we any further? Why do we not take his word? why do we not depend wholly upon him? why are we still covetous? why are we still distrustful?

ful? why do we dissemble and deceive? Oh we of little faith! Our Lord Jesus knowing right well the distrustfulness of our nature, & the deep root it hath in us is not only content to make these great and royal promises unto us, which were enough, but also strengtheneth and backeth us with many strong Reasons to support our weakness in this behalf. He therefore bringeth us back to a due consideration of things. Consider (saith he) the Ravens: consider the fowls of the Heavens: for they neither sow nor reap, nor carry into barns, and yet God feedeth them; they want nothing. Consider the Lillies, how they grow, they neither labour nor spin; yet Solomon in all his royalty was not clothed like one of these, Luke. 12. Oh therefore that we would consider these things! Oh that we would consider, that our life is more worth than meat, and our bodies then rayment! Oh that we would consider, that with all our carking and caring we can do no good at all no not so much as add one cubit to our stature! Truly, truly, if we would deeply ponder these Reasons of our Saviour, and apply them to our selves: they might serve for a bulwark and sure defence against covetousness. If men would consider how that great King of Heaven, who hath his way in the whirl-wind and the Clouds are the dust of his feet, Neh. 1. 3. careth for the little VVren and silly Sparrow, how he looketh to them, how he tendereth them, how he provideth for them every day, both breakfast, dinner, and supper, it might serve to correct our distrustfulness. For who ever saw these, or any other fowl, starve for hunger? so good a Father, and so good a Nurse have they. And are not we much better than they? Hath not God more care of us, than of them: Yes verily, a thousand times. For he loveth them but for our sakes: how much more then doth he love our selves? Therefore I say again and again, if we would consider these things, and lay them to heart, they would nip covetousness on the head; and drive it quite out of our hearts. Let us consider therefore, that God Provided for man before man was; then how much more will he provide for man now that he is? Is he our Father and will he

he not provide for us? Is he our King, and will he regard us? Is he our Shephard, and will he not look after us? Hath he provided Heaven for us, and will he not give us earth? Hath he given his Son Christ, and shall he not with him give us all things? Doth he provide for his enemies, and will he not provide for his freinds; Doth he provide for whom mongers, and will he neglect his chosen? Doth he send his rain, and cause the Sun to shine upon the unjust, and shall he not upon the Just? Doth he provide for them which are not of the family, and will he not provide for his own family? VVill a man feed his hoggs and not care for his servants? Or will he care for his servants, and not regard his own Children? Oh then let us consider these Reasons: let us remember, that our Heavenly Father hath a great care for the preservation of his creatures, as once he had for their creation. Let us therefore remember that he that giveth the day, will provide for us the things of the day. Let us remember, that God always giveth for sustentation, though not for satiety, *Prov. 10. 38.* Let us remember, that *God will not famish the souls of the righteous.* Let us remember how God never faileth his. For whoever trusted in the Lord, and was confounded?

Phil. What then is the cause that many do want these outward streams?

Theol. The cause is in themselves, because they want faith. For if we had faith, we could want nothing. For Faith feareth no Famine, as faith an ancient Father (*Hieron. ad Heliodorum.*) Another faith Cyprian (*in oratione Dominica*) Forasmuch as all things are Gods, he that hath God can want nothing, if himself be not wanting unto God. Therefore to have God is to have all things; for if we have him our freind, we have enough, we need go no further. For he will make men our friends: yea, he will make Angels, and all Creatures to be serviceable unto us, and to do continual homage unto us. Therefore let us make God our friend, and then have we done all at once, that

ay concern our good, both for this life and a better. But if he stand not our friend, if we have not him on our side, if he back us not, then all other things whatsoever can do us no good, all is not worth a but-
 on: For, (August) *Quid prodest si omnia habes, cum*
men qui omnia dedit non habeas? What is a man the-
 better, though he have all things, and be without him
 which is the author of all things?

Phil. Herein you speak very truly, no doubt. For we
 many have great plenty of outward things, but because
 they have not God, they can have no true comfort in their
 blessing with them.

Theol. True indeed: For, Man liveth not by bread
 ly, (saith our Lord Jesus) but by every word that pro-
 edeth out of the mouth of God. Matth. 4. And again
 saith, Though a man have abundance, yet his life consist-
 eth not in the things that he hath. Luk. 12. For with-
 out gods blessing, there can be no sound comfort in
 any thing. We see by daily experience how the
 word curseth the wicked, though they have abun-
 dance. For some having abundance, yet are visited
 with continual sicknesses. Some having abundance,
 they are away with consumptions. Others having abun-
 dant, dye of surfeiting. Others are snatched away
 by untimely death, in the midst of all their jollity.
 Others are visited with great loss both by Sea and by
 land. Others are vexed with curst VVives, and
 disobedient Children. Some again commit murders
 and treasons, and so lose all at once. Others are
 wasted and consumed by the secret curse of God, no
 man knoweth how. Some having great riches, are
 given over to the murderers, some to the thief, some to
 the poysoner. Therefore the wise King saith, *There is a*
evil, which I have seen under the Sun, namely riches,
that perish for the owners thereof to their hurt, Eccles. 9. 13.
 Zophar also the Naamathite, saith; (*Job 20. 22, 23.*)
When the wicked shall have sufficient and enough, he shall
be brought into straits. The hand of every troublesome man
shall be upon him. When he shall fill his belly, God will
cast him upon him his fierce wrath, which he shall rain upon
him in stead of his meat.

Thus then it is clear, that mans life and good estate dependeth not upon the abundance of outward things, but only upon the blessing and providence of God. For his blessing onely maketh rich, and it doth bring no sorrow with it, (Prov. 10. 31.) For, better is a little to the just, than great abundance to many of the wicked, (Ps. 37. 16.) Better is a little with the fear of the Lord, than great treasure, and trouble therewith, (Prov. 15. 16.) Better is a little with righteousness, than great revenue without equity, (Prov. 16. 8.)

Thus then I conclude this point. Man liveth not by bread, but by a blessing on bread; not by outward means, but by a blessing upon means. For how can bread, being a dead thing, and having no life in it, give life to others?

Phil. I do not well understand the meaning of the words. By every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

Theol. Thereby is meant the decree, ordinance and providence of God, which upholdeth all things, even the whole order of Nature.

For the Scripture saith, (Psal. 33. 9.) He spake, and it was done: he commanded, and they were created, which words we plainly see, that God doth but speak, and it is done; he doth command, and all creatures are preserved. For God doth all things with his word. He created all things with his word, he preserveth all things with his word, he speaketh, and it is done. His words are words of power and authority. Whatsoever he saith, whatsoever he calleth for it must be done presently, without any delay: there is no wavering of him. He calleth for famine, and behold famine. He calleth for plenty, and behold plenty. He calleth for pestilence, and behold pestilence. He calleth for the sword, and behold the sword. All Angels, all men, all beasts, all fishes, all fowls, all creatures whatsoever must obey him, and be at his beck. He is the greatest commander: his Word commandeth Heaven and earth, and the Sea. All creatures must be obedient to his will, and subject to his Ordinance.

This is the cause why all things, both in Heaven, earth, and the Sea, do keep their immutable and unvariable courses, times and seasons, even because he hath charged them so to do. And they must of necessity alwaies, at all times, and for ever obey; for the creatures must obey the Creator. This Act of Parliament was made the first week of the world, and never since was or can be repealed.

Phil. But to call you back again to the point we had in hand: Resolve me, I pray you, of this; whether many of the dear children of God do not, in this life, sometimes want outward things, and are brought into great distresses.

Theol. Yes certainly. For *Elijah* did want, and was in distress, (1 King. 17.) *Paul* did want, and was in many distresses, (2 Cor. 1. 8.) The holy Christians mentioned in the *Hebrews* did want, and were in marvellous distresses, (2 Cor. 11. 25.) Many of Gods dear ones have in all ages wanted, (Heb. 11. 36.) and at this day also do want, and are greatly distressed. But this is a most infallible truth, that howsoever Gods children may want and be low brought, yet they are never utterly forsaken but are holpen even in greatest extremities: yea, when all things are desperate, and brought even to the last cast.

To this point most notably speaketh the Apostle, saying, (2 Cor. 4. 8.) We are afflicted on every side, but we despair not: we are persecuted, but not forsaken; we are cast down, but we perish not. The Prophet *Jeremiah* saith, (Lam. 3.) The Lord will not forsake for ever: though he send affliction, yet will he have compassion, according to the multitude of his mercies: For he doth not punish willingly, nor from his heart, nor afflict the children of men. The Kingly Prophet saith, Surely the Lord will not fail his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance, (Ps. 94. 14.) The Lord himself saith, For a moment in mine anger I hid my face from thee, but with everlasting mercy have I had compassion on thee, Isa. 55. 8. So when we may fully assure our selves, and even write of it (as a most undoubted and sealed truth) that Gods

Children shall never be utterly forsaken in their troubles.

Phil. Sith the care and providence of God is so great for his children as you have largely declared: what then I pray you, is the cause why God suffereth his to be brought into so many troubles and necessities?

Theol. Their profit and benefit is the cause, and not their hurt. For he loveth them, when he smiteth them. He favoureth them, when he seemeth to be most against them. He aimeth at their good, when he seemeth to be most angry with them. He woundeth them, that he may heal them. He presseth them that he may ease them. He maketh them cry, that afterward they may laugh. He alwayes meaneth well unto them, he never meaneth hurt. He is most constant in his love towards them. If he bring them into necessities it is but for the tryal of their faith, love, patience and diligence in prayer.

If he cast them into the fire, it is not to consume them; but to purge and refine them. If he bring them into great dangers it is but to make them call upon him more earnestly for help and deliverance.

He passeth us that we might cry; we cry that we may be heard: we are heard, that we might be delivered. So that here is no hurt done; we are worse scared than hurt.

Even as the Mother, when her child is wayward threatneth to throw it to the Wolf, or scareth it with some poker, or bulbagger, to make it cling more unto her, and be quiet; So the Lord oftentimes sheweth the terrible faces of troubles and dangers, to make us cleave and cling faster unto him, and also teach us to esteem better of his gifts, when we enjoy them, and to be more thankful of them; as health, wealth, peace, liberty, safety, &c.

So then still we see, here is nothing meant on Gods part but good: as it is written, *All things work together for good to them that love God,* (Rom. 8.) For, even the afflictions of Gods children are so sanctified unto them by the Spirit, that thereby they are made partakers

kers of the holiness of God ; thereby they do enjoy the quiet fruit of righteousness, (*Heb. 12. 10, 11.*) thereby they attain unto a greater measure of joy in the Holy Ghost, (*1 Thes. 1. 6.*) thereby the world is crucified to them, and they to the world, (*Gal. 6. 14.*) thereby they are made conformable to the death of Christ (*Phil. 3. 10.*) thereby they are kept from the condemnation of the World ; thereby they learn experience, patience, hope, &c.

So that all things considered, Gods children are no losers by their afflictions, but gainers. It is better for them to have them, than to be without them ; they are very good for them. For when Gods children are chastised, it is as it should be ; For to them the cross is mercy, and loss is gain. Afflictions are their schooling, and their adversity their best University.

It is good for me (saith the only man of God) that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes. (*Psa. 119.*) By his afflictions therefore he learned much, and became a good Scholar in God's Book, and well-seen in his Statutes and Laws. He grew to great wisdom and judgment by his chastisements. All things turned about in God's merciful Providence, to his everlasting comfort. For I say again and again, That all things tend to the good of God's chosen people. And therefore that state which God will have his children to be in, is alwaies best for them : because he who can best discern what is best ; seeth it to be best for them ; whether it be sickness or health, poverty or plenty, prison or liberty, prosperity or adversity. For sometimes sickness is better for us than health, and poverty then plenty. Are therefore the Children of God sick ? It is best for them. Are they poor ? It is best for them, Are they in any trouble ? It is best for them : because their good Father will turn it to the best. He will oftentimes cut us short of our lusts and desires, because he seeth we will bane our selves with them, he in fatherly care will take the knife from us, because he seeth we will hurt our selves with it. He will keep us short of Health and

Wealth, because he knoweth we will be the worse for them. He will not give us too much ease and prosperity in this world; for he knoweth it will poyson us. He will not allow us continual rest, like standing ponds; for then he knoweth we will gather for them scum and filth. He dealeth fatherly and mercifully with us in all things; even then seeking our greater good, when we think he doth us most harm.

And to speak all in a word: he bringeth us into troubles and straits to this end especially, that we may hear of us. For he right well knoweth our nature, he is well acquainted with our disposition: he knoweth we will not come at him, but when we stand in need of him; we care not for him so long as all goeth well with us. But if we come into distress or want any thing that we fain would have, then he is sure to hear of us, as he saith by the Prophet, *their affliction they will seek me early.* (Hos. 5. 15.)

And another Prophet saith, *Lord, in trouble have they visited thee: they poured out a Prayer when thy chastisement was upon them,* Isa. 26. 16. So then now, I hope you do plainly see the cause why the Lord bringeth his children into so many troubles and necessities.

Phil. *I do see it indeed, and am very well satisfied with it. But yet let me ask you one thing further: Are God's children always sure to be delivered out of their troubles?*

Theol. Yes verily: and (out of doubt) so far forth as God seeth good for them: For it is written, *Great are the troubles of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.* (Psal. 34. 19.) Saint Peter saith, *The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation.* (2 Pet. 2. 9.) As if he should say, He is well bearen to it, and well seen and experienced with it, so as he can do it easily and without any trouble at all. It is said of Joseph being in prison, *That when his appointed time was come, and the counsel of the Lord had tried him, the King sent and loosed him. the Ruler of the people delivered him* (Ps 105. 19, 20.) And again the Scriptures saith, *The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth*

them, and delivereth them out of all their troubles. The Angel of the Lord tarrieth round about them that fear him and delivereth them. (Psal. 34. 17.) And in another place, the Lord himself saith, concerning the righteous man. Because he hath loved me, therefore I will deliver him. I will exalt him, because he hath known my Name. He shall call upon me in trouble, and I will hear him. I will be with him in trouble: I will deliver him, and glorifie him (Psal. 91. 17.) So also saith Eliphaz the Temanite; He shall deliver thee in six troubles, and in the seventh, the evil shall not touch thee. (Job. 5.) Come, my people, saith the Lord, Enter thou into my Chambers, and shut the doors after thee: hide thy self for a very little while, until the indignation pass over. (Isa. 26. 20.) And the Prophet saith, Upon Mount Zion shall be deliverance, and it shall be holy: and the house of Jacob shall possess their hereditary Possession. (Obad. 17.) Almost innumerable places of the Scriptures might be alledged to this purpose; but these may suffice. Therefore let us know for a certaintie, that so sure as troubles and afflictions are to the Children of God, so sure also is deliverance out of the same. As we may write of the one, and make reckoning of it, as sure as the coat on our back; so may we also in God's good time, write of the other, and make full account of it, as sure as the Lord is true. Abraham was in trouble, but delivered. Job in trouble, but delivered. David in great trouble, but delivered. The three Children in the Furnace, but delivered. Daniel in the Lyons Den, but delivered. Jonas in the Whales belly, but delivered. Paul in innumerable troubles, but yet delivered out of all.

Phil. All this being true that you say, it followeth, that God's Children are chastised only for their good, and ever more sure of deliverance in his appointed time. Which thing being so, methinks there is no cause at all why they should be over-heavy, or too much cast down in their afflictions.

Theol. Assuredly there is no cause at all, but rather cause why they should rejoyce, clap their hands and sing care away. For can a Father forsake his Chil-

dren? a King his subjects? a Master his Servant, or Shepherd his sheep? Doth not *Jehovah* say, *I will not leave thee nor forsake thee?* (*Heb. 13.*) Doth not our Heavenly Father know we have need of these things? Hath not God given us his word, that we shall want outward things? Hath he not said, they shall be cast upon us? Why then should we be dismayed? Why should we hang down our heads? Why should we not pluck up good hearts, and be of good cheer? God is our dear Father; he is our best friend; he is our dayly Benefactor; he keepeth us at his own charge, and charges, he grudgeth us nothing, he thinketh nothing too much for us; he loveth us most dearly; he is most chary and tender over us; he cannot endure the wind should blow upon us; he will have us want nothing that is good for us. If we will eat good things, we shall have it. He hath given us his faithful promise, that as long as we live, we shall never want. Let us therefore rejoyce and be merry. For Heaven is ours, Earth is ours, God is ours, Christ is ours, and all is ours; as the Apostle saith, *All is yours, and ye are Christs, and Christ is Gods.* (*1 Cor. 3. 22.*) Let the world clap their hands, and crow long before it is day, saying, All is theirs, but the Children of God may say, and say truly, All is ours. For they have true title and proper interest through Christ, in all things. Creatures. Many are their priviledges, great are their prerogatives, they are free of Heaven, and free of Earth. They are the only free Denizons of the world: Christ hath purchased them their freedom, Christ hath made them free, and therefore they are free indeed. They are free from sin, free from hell, free from damnation. They are at peace with God, Men and Angels: they are at peace with themselves. They are at peace with all Creatures: they are young Princes, Angels Fellows, descended of the high house, of the blood Royal of Heaven, States of the radice, and heirs apparent to the immortal Crown. Therefore God hath commanded his Angels to guard them, being such young Princes as they are: yea,

God hath given a very straight charge to all his Creatures to look to them, to see to them that they want nothing, that they take no hurt: so jealous, so chary so tender he is of them. The Angels must comfort *Jacob*, (*Gen. 32. 12.*) the Whale must rescue *Jonas*: (*Jonah 2.*) the Raven must feed *Elias*. (*1 King. 17.*) the Sun and Moon must stay for *Joshua*: (*Jos. 10.*) the Sea must divide it self, that *Moses* and his people may pass through: (*Exod. 14*) the fire must not burn the three children: the Lyons may not devour *Daniel*: (*Dan. 6.*) All the Creatures must change their nature, rather than God's Children should not be holpen and delivered. Oh therefore how great is the happiness of God's chosen! Who can express it? Who can utter it? they know not their own happiness: it is hid from them. Afflictions do Cloud it: troubles do overshadow it: crosses do dim it: and there is an interposition of the earth betwixt their sight and it. But this is most certain and sure, that the best is behind with the Children of God; all the sweet is to come; their happiness doth not appear in this world. Their life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ shall appear, then shall they also appear with him in glory. (*1 John 3. 21.*) It doth not yet appear what they shall be; but when he cometh, they shall be made like unto him. (*Col. 3. 3, 4.*) Their names are already taken, and entered into the book of life, and one day they shall be crowned. One day it shall be said unto them, Come ye blessed, &c. (*Psal. 16.*) One day they shall enjoy his presence, where is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand there is pleasures for evermore. Therefore let all God's secret ones rejoyce, sing, and be merry. For howsoever in this world they be contemned, trodden under foot, made no-bodies, and walk as shadows, being counted as the very rags of the Earth, and the objects of the world: yet the time will come, when their happiness and felicity shall be such as never entered into the heart of man: it is endless, unspeakable, and unconceivable.

Phil. I do now plainly see, that there is no cause why

God's people should be too heavy and dumpish in their affliction. I see, that though they be not free from hurtful afflictions. For no rod, no cross, no chastisement is hurtful unto them, but all, in the conclusion, cometh to a blessed issue.

Theol. You have uttered a great and a most certain truth. For there is no affliction or tryal, which God imposeth upon his children, but if they endure it correctly, trust in his mercy firmly, and carry his pleasure obediently, it hath a blessed and a comfortable end. Therefore the people of God may well be merry in the midst of their sorrows. They may with patience and comfort submit themselves to their superiors corrections, taking them patiently, and not resisting his holy rod, and saying in themselves, Since my Father will have it so, I am content; seeing it is his mind, I am willing withal. As old Eli said, Let the Lord, let him do what he will. (1 Sam. 3. 18.) And as David in like submission said in a certain case, Behold, here am I: let him do to me as it seemeth good in his own eyes. (2 Sam. 15. 26.) And again he saith, I was dumb, and opened not my mouth; because thou Lord hast done it. (Psal. 39. 9.) Behold here is the Patience of God's Saints, and their humble submission to his most holy will. They know all shall end well, and that maketh them glad to think of it. I conclude then, that the Children of God are happy in what state soever they are; happy in trouble, happy out of trouble; (Deut. 28.) happy in poverty, happy in plenty; blessed in sickness, blessed in health, blessed at home likewise, and abroad; and every where blessed. But on the contrary, the wicked are cursed in what state soever they are, cursed in sickness, cursed in health; cursed in plenty, cursed in poverty, cursed in prosperity, cursed in adversity; cursed in honour, cursed in dishonour: For all things work together for their destruction. Nothing doth them good. They are not any thing the better either by God's mercies or judgements. All weathers are sent unto them. They are alwayes the same, in prosper-

and adversity; they are no changelings. And as we say, A good year doth not mend them, nor an ill year pair them.

Ph. You have long insisted upon this point. Now proceed to the fourth sign of a man's damnation, which is the contempt of the Gospel, and lay open both the greatness of the sin, and the danger of it.

Theol. This sin is of another nature than the former. It is a sin against the first Table. It toucheth the person of God himself. For to condemn the Gospel; it is to condemn God himself whose Gospel it is, (Luk. 10. 16.) If to condemn the Ministers of the Gospel, be to condemn God and Christ, (as our Lord Jesus avoucheth) how much more than to condemn the Gospel it self? Therefore it is dangerous meddling with this sin. It is to meddle with edged-tools, to meddle with Princes matters, to touch the Ark, to come near the holy Mountain, all which were things full of great peril and danger. Yea, it is to spill the Sacrament. It is *Noli me tangere*: It is to rail at a King, it is to spit God in the face. It is high treason against the King of Glory. Therefore this sin, of all other, can never be endured, and may at no hand be born withal. For can a morral king endure the contempt of his Laws? Can he put up the contempt of his own person? Can he abide any to spit at his Scepter, or to throw a stone at it? No surely he will not. Therefore the Holy Ghost saith, *He that despiseth Moses's Laws, dyeth without mercy, under two or three witnesses.* Of how much sorer punishment suppose ye shall he be worthy, which treadeth under foot the Son of God, and counteth the blood of the Testament as an unholy thing. (Heb. 10. 28.) (wherewith he was sanctified) and doth despise the Spirit of grace? And again, if they were punished which obeyed not the word spoken by Angels, how shall we escape if we neglect so great Salvation. (Heb. 2. 2, 3.) If they escaped not, which refused him that spake on Earth, how shall we escape if we turn away from him that speaketh from Heaven? (Heb. 12. 25.) Therefore our Saviour Christ saith, That it shall be easier for

Sodom in the day of judgment, than for the Contemners of the Gospel. (Luk. 10. 12.)

Moreover he saith, The Queen of the South shall rise up in judgment against all forward despisers of his Word. For she came from the uttermost parts of the Earth, to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold a greater than Solomon is here. (Matth. 12. 42.) For Christ is greater than Solomon; his Doctrine and wisdom far more excellent. And therefore their sin is the greater which they contemn it: They shall never be able to answer for it. For the Spirit saith, He that despiseth the word, shall be destroyed. (Prov. 13. 13.) St. Peter also telleth us, that the old world, and men of the first age are now in Hell-fire, because they both despised, and were disobedient to the Doctrine of Christ; (1 Pet. 3. 19.) which (though not personally, yet in his divine Spirit he spake by Noah. (1 Pet. 3. 20.) So then we see clearly, God will never take it at our hands, that this glorious Gospel should be so universally and openly contemned as it is.

Phil. You have spoken most truly, and also shewed out of the Scriptures that the contempt of the Gospel is most hainous sin, yet for all that, it is most lamentable to consider, how little men esteem it, and how light they make of it. Many regard it no more than an Egg-shell; they think it not worth a galley half-penny; they will not go to the door to hear it; they take it to be a breath of wind, and a sound to them, and so the matter is ended.

They esteem it but as a noise, or empty sound in the ear, or as a voice afar off, that a man understandeth not; they never felt the power of it in their hearts: Therefore they prefer their Sheep, their Farms, their Oxen, their Profits, their Pleasures, yea, every thing before it: they know it not to be any such precious jewel, as it is. Though our Lord Jesus himself compare it to a hid treasure, and a most precious pearl, yet these filthy swine of the world tread it under feet, for they know not the price of it. Though Solomon the wise saith, All the Merchandise of gold and silver, pearl and precious stones, are not compared to it; (Prov. 3. 14.) yet these Beasts,

dogs and hogs of the world contemn it. They esteem a Cow more than Christ's most glorious Gospel.

They are like Esop's Cock, which made more account of a Barly corn, than all the precious stones in the world; they are like little children, that esteem their rattle more than a bag of Gold; they are like the Gadarens, which esteemed their hogs more than Christ and his Gospel; they make nothing of it: they think it not worth the while. Many of them sit idle in the streets, even upon the Sabbath; while the Gospel is preached in their Churches; many are at Cards and Tables in the Ale-houses. Many on the Sabbath sleep upon their beds all the Sermon-while in the afternoon. Many will hear a Sermon in the forenoon, and they take that to be as much as God can require at their hands, and that he is somewhat beholden to them for it; but as for the afternoon, they will hear none; then they will to Bowls or Tables. These men serve God in the forenoon, and the Devil in the after-noon. Some run after Whores and Harlots on the sabbath, some run to Dancing and Bear-bating, some sit upon their Stalls, some sit in their Shops, some by the fire-side, some sit idle in the Streets, some go to the Stool-ball, and others look on. O miserable wretches! O cursed Carriffs! O monstrous Hell-hounds, which so grossly and openly contemn the Gospel of Christ! what will become of them in the end. Assuredly their damnation sleepeth not. A thousand deaths wait for them; they lye open on all sides to the wrath of God. And we may wonder at his marvellous patience, that he doth not throw down balls of wild-fire from Heaven to consume and burn up both them, their shops and houses, and even make them spectacles of his vengeance, for so notorious contempt of such sacred, holy and high things.

Theol. You have spoken very truly, zealously and religiously; and I do greatly commend you for it. And I must needs affirm the same things, for they cannot be denyed, and for mine own part, I think the Gospel was never so openly contemned in any age (of a people living under the profession of it, and under a godly and Christian Prince) as it is in this age.

For

For howsoever some make a shew of Religion, yet they have denied the power thereof. They turn the grace of God into wantonness, as St. Jude saith ver. 4. They make the Gospel a cloak for their sins. They receive it, and embrace it, as it will best stand with their profits and pleasure, their lusts and likings, their credits and policies, and not a jot further. They will practise it at their pleasure. These men profess they know God, but by their works deny him, and are abominable, disobedient, and to every good work reprobate. Tit. 1. 16. This age is full of such carnal protestants.

Phil. This age indeed aboundeth with many hollow-hearted hypocrites, dissemblers, and time-servers, which howsoever they make a face, and bear a countenance, as though they loved the Gospel, yet their heart is not within. Their heart is with Atheism, their heart is with Popery, they have a Pope in their belly, they be Church-Papists. Howsoever, now and then come to the Church, and hear a Sermon, and shew a good countenance to the Preacher, yet their heart goeth after covetousness, The Lord complaineth of this by the Prophet, saying, This people which sit before thee, and hear thy words: but they will not do them, Ezek. 33. 32. For with their mouth they make jests: and their heart goes after covetousness. God complaineth of this also by the Prophet Jeremiah, saying, Will you steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and stand before me in this house, whereupon my name is called, and say, We are delivered, though we have done all these abominations? Jer. 7. 9. Is this house become a den of thieves, whereupon my name is called? where we see how the Lord doth chide his people, and sharply reprove them for abusing of his Temple, worship, and sacrifices, making them a cloak for their sins, and making his house a den of thieves, which should be an assembly of Saints. Now all this is a lively description of our time, wherein many use the exercises of the Word, Prayer, and Sacraments, not to kill and mortifie sin, but to nourish and shelter their sins. For they blind imagine, that if they come to the Church, and pray, and

hear the Sermon, they are discharged of their sins, though they leave them not. They imagine they have given God his full due; and that therefore they may be the more bold to sin afterward. These kind of hypocrites are like rogues which use medicines not to cure sores; but to make sores. These are like the Papist, which think if they hear Mass in the morning, they may do what they list all the day after.

Theol. I see now you have very well profited in the knowledge of God and true Religion. You have spoken soundly, and like a man of knowledge in Gods matters. For the common sort of people think indeed, that all Religion consisteth in the outward service of God, though their hearts be far from him. To whom God may justly say, *This people draweth near me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me, Matth. 15. 8.* Of whom also God may justly take up all his just complaints of his people *Israel* and *Judah*, which are so frequent in all the Prophets: to wit, that he did abhor their sacrifices, loath their oblations, detest their incense, despise their new-Moons, disdain their Rams, Lambs, *Isa. 66.* and Goats, accounting them all but as mans blood, dogs blood, swines blood; and all because their hands were full of blood, because they executed not Justice and judgment in the gate; because they were not obedient to his will: because their hearts were not with him; because they used, or rather abused all these things as shelters for their sins.

Phil. The great contempt of the Ministers of the Gospel in this age doth strongly argue the contempt of the Gospel it self. For a man cannot love the Gospel, and hate the faithful Ministers thereof. But we see by lamentable experience, that the most grave, godly, and learned ministers, are had in derision of very base and vile persons. And as *Job* saith, *They whose Fathers I have refused to set with the dogs of my flocks, they were the children of fools, and the children of villains, which were more vile than the earth.* For now every rascal dares scoff and scorn at the most grave and ancient Fathers and Pastors of the Church, dares flout them as they walk in the streets, and as they ride

ride by the high-ways, and though the holy Ghost gives them glorious and lofty titles, Tit. 1. 7. (as the stewards of Gods own house, disposers of his secrets. 1 Cor. disbursers of his treasure, keepers of the broad seal, keepers of the keys of heaven, Mat. 16. 19. Gods Secretaries, Gods Ambassadors, 2 Cor. 5. 20. Angels; Rev. 3. 7. 14. yea, the very glory of Christ: 1 Cor. 2. 8. and all this to express the excellency of their calling) yet these vile varlets and venomous vermine of the earth, dare call themselves proud Prelates, pill'd Parsons, pelting Priests. O monstrous and intolerable impiety! Now its come to pass that this most sacred Function (which is glorious in the sight of God and his Angels, and it self most honourable) is had in greatest contempt of all callings. For now the earth is full of rank Atheists, and mock-Gods, which scoff at the Gospel, and bleat out their tongues at all religion. These kind of fellows never dissemble for the matter, they make no shew at all, they are no hypocrites, they hide not their sins, but declare them openly like Sodom. They care not if they never come to the Church; they are full of it. They live like brut beasts. They think the Scriptures are but fables. They rail at the Ministers and Preachers; they make flat opposition against them, and are notorious mockers and past-graces.

Theol. Of such the Apostle Saint Peter foretold, That in the last dayes should come mockers, and such as would live after their own lusts, &c. Of such, a godly writer saith, *Verbum Dei secure contemnitur, promissiones inanes esse creduntur, mina pro fabulis habentur*: That is, The Word of God is carelessly contemned, his promises are counted vain, and his threatnings fables. Of such the Poet saith:

*Heu! vivunt homines tanquam mors nulla sequatur;
Aut velut infernus fabula vana foret.*

Alas! men live as they should never die;
Or as though speech of hell were a stark lie.

Now is also the time, wherein the world swarmed with Papists and Atheists; and most men live as if there were no God: For now Religion is hated, true godliness despised, zeal abhorred, sincerity scoffed

uprightness loathed, Preachers contemned, Professors
disdained, and almost all good men had in derision.
For now we may justly complain with the Prophet,
Judgement is turned backward and justice standeth afar
off: Truth is fallen in the streets, and equity cannot en-
ter. Yea, truth faileth, and he that refraineth from evil,
maketh himself a prey, (Isa 59. 14.) The Prophet Mi-
chah bewaileth the times, saying, The good man is peri-
shed out of the earth, and there is none righteous among
men. They all lye in wait for blood; every man hunteth
his neighbour with a net, Mic. 7. 2. The Prophet Jere-
miah complaineth of the same evil in his time; name-
ly, that the people were come to be past shame in
sinning; (Jer. 8. 12.) Were they ashamed (saith he)
when they had committed abomination? Nay, they were
not ashamed, neither could they have any shame. This is
a lively picture, and a very counterpane of our time;
for now we have put on a brow of brass; we are be-
come impudent in sin. We cannot blush, we cannot
be ashamed. We are almost past shame, and past
grace. O Lord, what will this geer grow to in the
end!

Phil. We may justly fear some great judgement of God to
be neer unto us: yea, even to hang over our heads. For the
Lord will never leave the contempt of his Gospel and his
Ministry unpunished.

Theol. You have spoken a truth; and we have heard
before how the old World was plagued for it. And
we read how grievously the Jews were afflicted by the
Romans for this sin: as our Lord Jesus did plainly
foretel. We read also, that after the Lord had
preached the Gospel himself, and spread it abroad
by his Apostles, conquering the World thereby,
(which thing was signified by the white Horse,
(Rev. 6. 2.) his Rider, his Bow, and his Crown) and yet
shortly after, saw that the same began to be contemned
in the world, and made light of; then he did in most
fearful manner plague the earth with wars, blood-shed-
dings, tumults, dearth, famine, and pestilence; which
are all signified by the red horse, black horse, and
the

the pale horse, which did appear at the opening of the second, third, and fourth seal. So likewise undoubtedly, God will severely punish all Injuries, wrongs and contempts done to his faithful Embassadors, as appeareth, *Rev. 11.5.* where it is set down, That, *If any will hurt the two witnesses with their two Olives, and their two Candlesticks,* (whereby is signified the faithful Preachers of the Gospel, with all their spiritual treasures and Heavenly light) *fire should proceed out of their mouths, and devour their adversaries:* that is, The fire of God's wrath should consume all that had oppressed them, either by mocks, flouts, railings, slanders, imprisonments, or any other kind of indignity. Of this we have a plain example or two in the Scripture. First, we read how fire came down from heaven, and consumed the notorious Captain and his fifty, at the threatening and calling for of *Elijah*, (*2 King. 1.10.*) Secondly, how the Bears came out of the forrest, and roar in peices the and forty yokkers which mocked *Elisba* the Prophet of God, calling him bald-head, bald-head, *2 King. 2.23.* So then by these examples it is manifest, that how ever the Lord may wink at these things for a time, and make as though he saw them not, yet the time will come, when he will rain fire and brimstone upon all scoffers of his faithful Ministers, and contemners of the Gospel. All this is plainly declared in the first chapter of the Proverbs of *Solomon*: where is shewed how the wisdom of God, even *Jesus Christ* the highest wisdom, doth cry aloud all abroad in the world, and manifest himself in the open streets; but yet is contemned of wicked worldlings, and scoffing fools. Therefore saith Christ, *Prov. 1.24, 25.* *Because I have called, and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand, but none will regard: ye have hated knowledge, and despised all counsel; therefore I will laugh at your destruction, and mock when your fear cometh upon you, like a sudden destruction; and your destruction like a whirl-wind. Then shall they call upon me but I will not answer, they shall see me early but they shall not find me.* Herein then we see his terrible wrath and vengeance threatned from

Heaven against all prophane contemnners of Christ and his everlasting Gospel, or any of the faithful Publishers and Proclaimers thereof. Behold therefore, ye despisers, and wonder : consider well what will become of you in the end. Do not think that the most just God will alwayes put it up at your hands that ye should so manifestly condemn both his Word and most zealous Preachers, and Professors thereof. No, no ; assure your selves, he will be even with you at last. He will smite you both sideling and cverthwart : he will dog you and pursue you with his judgements, and never leave following the chase with you, till he hath destroyed you, and consumed you from off the face of the earth. For remember I pray you, what he saith in Deuteronomy, *If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold of judgement, I will execute vengeance on mine enemies, and I will reward them that hate me ; I will make mine arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall eat the flesh of mine adversaries,* Deut. 32. 41, 42.

Phil. Truly, Sir, we may justly fear, that for our contempt of the Gospel, and general coldness, both in the profession and practise thereof, God will take it from us, and give it to a people that will bring forth the fruit thereof.

Theol. We may well fear indeed, lest for our sins, especially our loathing of the heavenly *Manna*, the Lord remove our candlestick, take away our silver trumpets, let us no more hear the sweet bells of *Aaron*, cause all visions to fail, and our Sabbaths to cease, and bring upon us that most grievous and sore famine of not hearing the Word of the Lord, spoken of by *Amos* the Prophet, *Amos* 8. 11. Then shall our *Halcyon* days and golden years, be turned into weeping, mourning and lamentation. God for his infinite mercy sake, turn it away from us.

Phil. Amen, Amen ; and let us pray earnestly, night and day, that those fearful judgments may, according to Gods infinite mercy, be held back, which our sins do continually cry for ; and that his most glorious Gospel may be continued to us and our posterity, even yet with greater success.

Afun.

Asun. No doubt it is a very great sin to despise Word of God; and I think there is none so bad that will it. For we ought to love Gods word, God forbid He that loveth not Gods Word, it is pity he liveth.

Theol. These are but words of course: It is an matter to speak good words: and very many will as you say. But both you and they in your practice do plainly shew that you make no reckoning of it, esteem it no more than a dish-clout. I think, if matter were well tryed, you have scant a Bible in your house. But though you have one, it is manifest you seldom read therein with any care or conscience, and as seldom hear the word preached. How could you be so ignorant as you are?

Asun. I grant that I and some others are somewhat negligent in the hearing and reading of the Word of God; you cannot say therefore we do condemn it.

Theol. Yes verily: your continual negligence and carelesness doth argue a plain contempt. Sure you have no appetite nor stomach to the Holy Word of God. You had rather do any thing, than either read or meditate in it: it is irksom unto you; you have not two chapters in a week. All holy exercises of Religion are most bitter and tedious unto you: they are as Vinegar to your Teeth, and Smear to your eyes. The immoderate love of this World, and of vanity hath took away your appetite from heavenly things. And whereas you shift it off with negligence, as though that would excuse you: the Apostle hits you home, when he saith, *How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?* (Heb. 2.) Mark, that he saith, *If we neglect.*

Antil. Belike you think men have nothing else to do but to read the Scripture, and hear Sermons.

Theol. I do not say so: I do not say you should do nothing else. For God doth allow you with a good conscience, and in his fear, to follow the world in your calling, as hath been said before, But the

condemn in you and many others, that you will give no time to private Prayers, reading and Meditation in God's Word, neither morning nor evening; neither before your business, nor after. And although you have often vacant time enough, yet you will rather be idle in vanity, and idle prating, and gossiping, than in any good exercise of Religion. VVhich doth plainly shew, that you neither delight in holy things, neither is there any true fear of God before your eyes.

Antil. I tell you plainly we must tend our business, we may go beg else, we cannot live by the Scriptures. If we follow Sermons, we shall never thrive. What, do you think every man is bound to read the Scriptures? Have we not our five wits? Do we not know what we have to do? You would make Fools of us belike. But we are neither drunk nor mad.

Theol. That every man (of what condition soever) is bound in Conscience to hear and read the VVord of God, hath been shewed and proved in the beginning of our Conference: but as for your five wits, they will not serve your turn in these matters; though you had fifteen wits. For all the wit, reason and understanding of natural men, in God's matters, is as much blindness and meer foolishness. The Apostle saith, That the wisdom of the most wise in this world is not counted wisdom with God, but indeed very enmity against God. (1 Cor. 3. 18. Rom. 8. 7.) And again he saith, That the natural man (with all his five wits) understandeth not the things of the Spirit of God, because they are spiritually discerned. (1 Cor. 2. 14.) Most prudently to this point speaketh Elihu, saying, There is a spirit in man, but the inspiration of the Almighty giveth understanding, (Job 32. 8.)

Antil. I understand not these Scriptures which you do allege; they do not sink into my head.

Theol. I think so indeed: for the Holy Ghost saith, Wisdom is too high for a fool. (Prov. 24. 7.)

Antil. What do you call me fool? I am no more fool than your self.

Theol.

Theol. I call you not fool: but I tell you what the Scripture saith; which calleth all men (though others wise never so wise, politick and learned) very fools till they be truly enlightned and inwardly sanctified by the Spirit of God: as appeareth, (*Tit. 3. 3.*) where the Apostle affirmeth, that both *Titus* and himself, before they received the illuminating Spirit of God's grace, were very fools, without wit, and without all sense in God matters.

Phil. I pray you, good Mr. Theologus, let him alone for he will never have done cavilling. I see he is a notable caviller. Let us therefore proceed to speak of the first sign of condemnation, which is swearing.

Theol. It may well indeed be called a sign of condemnation. For I think it more than a sign, it is indeed an evident demonstration of a Reprobate. For I never knew any man truly fearing God in his heart, that was an usual and a common swearer.

Phil. I am flat of your mind for that. For it cannot be that the true fear of God and ordinary swearing should dwell together in one man, sith swearing is a thing forbidden by a flat statute: And God addeth a sore threat to his Law, that he will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain; but will most sharply and severely punish that man.

Theol. You say true. And God saith moreover That if we do not fear and dread his glorious and fearful Name *JEHOVAH*, he will make our plague wonderful. (*Deut. 28. 58.*) He saith also by his Prophet *Malachy*, That he will be as a swift witness against swearers. (*Mal. 3. 5.*) The Prophet *Zachary* saith, That the flying book of God's curse and vengeance, shall enter into the house of the Swearer, and he shall be cut off. (*Zach. 5. 4.*)

Therefore let all Swearers take heed, and look to themselves in time, for we see there is a rod in place laid up in store for them.

Phil. These threatnings being so great and grievous, and that from the God of Heaven himself, a man would think it should cause mens hearts to quake and tremble.

and make them afraid to rap out such Oaths as they do, if they were not altogether hardened, past feeling, and past grace.

Theol. True indeed, but yet we see by lamentable experience, how men are given over both to swear and forswear: for at this day there is no sin more common amongst us, than swearing, for many there be which cannot speak ten words, but one shall be an Oath. And numbers have got such a wicked custom of swearing, that they can by no means leave it, no more than a Black-more can change his skin, or a Leopard his spots: for it is made natural to them through custom, and they have got the habit of it. I do verily think, if it were high treason to swear, yet some could not leave swearing. And sure I am (as light as we make of it) that it is high treason against the Crown of Heaven: yea, it is a sin immediately against God, even against his own person: and therefore he hath forbidden it in the first Table of his Law.

Phil. Questionless this vice of swearing is, of all other sins most rise, in this Land. For you shall have little boys and Children in the streets, rap out oaths in most fearful manner. It would make a man's heart quake to hear them. We may think, they have sucked them out of their mothers breasts: but sure we are, they have learned them from the evil example of their Parents. And now days we cannot almost talk with a man, but (in ordinary speech) he will belch out one or another.

Theol. I will tell you a strange thing; and with great grief I speak it, I do verily think there are sworn in this Land an hundred thousand Oaths every day in one year.

Phil. No doubt, Sir, you are within compass. For now almost so many men, so many oaths; excepting some few in comparison. Nay, I know divers of mine own experience, which if they may be kept in talk, will swear every day in the year an hundred oaths for their parts.

Theol. O what a lamentable thing is it, we may well take up the old complaint of the Prophet Jeremiah

miah, who saith; that in his time, *The Land* mourn because of oaths. (Jer. 23. 10.) And we well wonder that the Land sinketh not because of Oaths: For if God were not a God of infinite patience, how could he endure his most sacred and glorious name to be so many thousand times blasphemed in one day, and that by such miserable wretches as we be!

Phil. We may indeed admire and wonder at the patience and long-suffering of God, that he spareth us so long, and giveth us so large a time of Repentance. Be sure it is, that the Prophet saith, That howsoever the Lord is slow to anger, yet he is great in power, and will surely clear the wicked. (Nah. 1. 3.) Though he wink at their monstrous oaths for a time, yet he forgetteth them never a whit, but scoreth them up, and restringeth them in his book of accounts: so as they stand in record against them. And when the great day of reckoning shall come, he will set them all in order before them, and lay them to their charge.

Let not the wicked swearers and blasphemers therefore think that they shall alwaies scape scot-free, because God letteth them alone a while, and deferreth their punishment. For the longer God deferreth, the more terrible will his strokes be when they come. The longer an arrow is held in the bow, the stronger will be the shot when it cometh forth. Though God have leaden feet, and cometh slowly to execute wrath, yet he hath an iron hand, and will strike deadly when he cometh. (Job. 24. 23.) Though God giveth the wicked security for a time, (as Job) yet his eyes are fixed upon all their waies. And in another place he saith, The wicked are reserved unto the day of destruction, and they shall be brought forth unto the day of wrath. (Job. 21. 30.) So then the holy man plainly affirmeth, that the state and condition of all rich and wealthy wordlings, is as the condition of an Ox, that is fattened up against the day of slaughter. (Job. 21. 13.) For he saith. They spend their daies in wealth, and suddenly go down to hell. But now I pray you

nate the Oaths which are so rife and common amongst us.
Theol. There be six Oaths which are (of all other)
 most rife and common, in every mans Mouth; and
 they be these :

1. By my faith. 2. By my Troth. 3. By our
 Lady. 4. By St. Mary. 5. By God. 6. As God
 shall judge me.

For you cannot rightly talk with a man, but he will
 hath out some one of these in his ordinary speech.

Asun. Do you count it so great a matter for a man to
 swear by his Faith, or his Troth?

Theol. Yes indeed do I. For our Faith and our
 Troth, are the most precious Jewels we have. Shall
 we then lay them to gage for every word we speak?
 It sheweth we are of small credit, nay very bank-
 rupts. For who but a bank-rupt will lay the best
 jewel in his house to pledge for every small trifle.

Asun. I know a man that will never swear, but by
 Rock, or Py, or Mouse-foot. I hope you will not say these
 Oaths, for he is as honest a man as ever brake bread,
 you shall not hear an oath come out of his mouth.

Theol. I do not think he is so honest a man as you
 take him; for it is no small sin to swear by Creatures.
 The Lord saith by his Prophet Jeremiah, *They have*
forsaken me, and sworn by them that are no Gods. Jer.
7.) So then to swear by Creatures, is to forsake
 God: and I trow you will not say, he is an honest
 man which forsaketh God.

Asun. I do not believe, that to swear by small things is
 forsaking of God.

Theol. You, and such as you are, will believe no
 more of the Word of God, than will stand with your
 taste. But whatsoever you believe, or believe not,
 the Word of God standeth sure; and no jot of it shall
 be proved false. But this I will say unto you,
 because you think it so small a matter to swear by
 Creatures, That the more vile and base the thing is
 you swear by, the greater is the oath: because
 ascribe that unto a base Creature, which is only
 due to God: namely, to know our hearts, and be

a discerner of secret things. For whatsoever a man sweareth by, he calleth it as a witness unto his conscience, that he speaketh the truth, and lyeth not in which thing onely belongeth unto God. And therefore in swearing by Creatures, we rob God of his honour, therefore to swear by the crosse of the money, or bread, or by mouse foot, or the fire, which they call Gods Angel, or any such like, is a robbing God of his honour, and an ascribing of that to the Creature, which is proper only to the Creator.

Asun. What say you then to them that swear by the Mass, and by the Rood?

Theol. Their sin is as great as the other: for it is a hainous thing to swear by Idols; as St. Mary a Lady, by the Mass, by the Rood, &c. The Prophet Amos saith, they that swear by the sin of Samaria, that say, thy God, O Dan, liveth: even they shall be cut off, and never rise up again. Amos. 8. 14. To swear by the sin of Samaria, is to swear by Idols: for Samaria was full of Idols.

Moreover the Lord threatneth by the Prophet Zephanie, that he will cut off them that swear by the Lord, and by Malcham, or by their King, Zeph. 1. 5. For the Idolaters called their Idol Molech their God.

Asun. Seeing you condemn both swearing by Creatures and swearing by Idols; what then must we swear by? You would have us swear by nothing, belike.

Theol. In our ordinary communication we must swear at all, either by one thing or another: but (as our Lord teacheth us) our communication must be by Yea, Nay, nay: For whatsoever is more than these, shall come of evil Mat. 5. 37. And St. James saith, Before things, my Brethren, swear not; neither by Heaven, nor by Earth, nor by any other oath: but let your Yea be Yea, and your Nay, Nay, lest you fall into condemnation, James 5. 12.

Antil. It seemeth you are an Anabaptist, you condemn swearing, you will have no swearing at all.

Theol. Not so: for though I condemn swearing by creatures, swearing by Idols, and vain swearing, I do allow of swearing before a Magistrate; and

ately also, in matters of weight and importance to the further bolting out of the truth.

This is warranted from Gods own mouth, where he saith, *Thou shalt swear, The Lord liveth in truth, in judgement, and in righteousness. Jer. 4. 2.* And in these cases only the name of God is to be sworn by, as it is written, *Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and thou shalt serve him, and shalt cleave unto him, and shalt swear by his Name. Deut. 10. 20.*

Asun. May we not swear by God, in our common talk?

Theol. At no hand. For that is to take the name of God in vain, which you know is forbidden. And one of the wise Heathens could say thus, (*Isocrat. ad Demon.*) When an oath is laid upon thee, undertake it for two causes: either for to deliver thy self from some grievous crime and accusation, or else to preserve thy friends from danger. So then, that Heathen man in common talk will not allow any oath, much less to swear by God. Another saith, (*Phocyl.*) Avoid an oath, though thou swear truly. So then we see vain swearing condemned even by Heathens.

Asun. Yea, but for all that we must swear, men will not believe us else.

Theol. Neither yet will they believe you any whit the more for your swearing. For it doth manifestly appear, that thousands make no more conscience at all of it, than of cracking of nuts: and therefore what wise man will believe them, though they swear never so much. But if you would make conscience always to speak the truth from your heart, without any oath at all, you shall be better believed of all honest and wise men, than otherwise with a thousand oaths.

Antil. It is the custom to swear.

Theol. But a wicked and devilish custom.

Antil. I hope, sir, we may swear, as long as we swear truly, and swear by nothing but that which is good.

Theol. It hath been answered before, that in vain matters you may not swear at all. *Antil. As long as we are worse then that, I hope God will hold us excused. v. 21. 8.*

Theol. God will not hold you excused & liars. shall

break his commandments, and continue so do

Antil. What say you then to them that swear with wine and blood, and such like, in a bravery, thinking that they setteth out their speech very well?

Theol. Hell gapeth for them: and they shall one day know what it is to blaspheme God.

Antil. What may we think of such as swear by Gods Soul, Gods body, Gods heart?

Theol. That their case is most wofull and dangerous, and I quake at the naming of them. They are most horrible, monstrous, and outrageous blasphemers enough to make the stones in the streets to crack, the clouds to fall upon our heads. And we may think that all the devils in Hell are in readinesse to cast such blasphemous villains headlong into that Lake which burneth with fire and brimstone for ever.

Antil. Do you find in Scripture, that God will so severely punish swearers?

Theol. Yes verily. For besides that which hath been spoken before, we have divers other examples. First *Senacherib*, the King of *Assyria*, who for his outrageous blasphemies against the God of heaven, was in a fearful and tragical manner, slain by his own Son *Adramalech* and *Sharezer*, and that in the Temple when he was a worshiping his Idol-God *Nisroch*, *King.* 19. 37. And yet behold a more fearful example of Gods wrath against blasphemers.

We read that an hundred thousand of the *Arameans* were slain by the *Israelites*, in one day for blaspheming God, *1 King.* 20. 29. and seven and twenty thousand being left, and fleeing into the City *Aphek* for refuge, were all slain by the fall of an high great wall. What shall I here speak how the sons of *Saul* the King of *Israel* were hanged up before the Lord in mount *Gibeah*, for the breach of the Covenant made to the *Gibeonites* long before! *1 Sam.* 3. 1. In these examples we may plainly see, that the just God

even in this life, so sometimes will be revenged on sinners and oath-breakers. And therefore the wise creature in all ages have been very careful for the same, do allow of

forming of oaths: as *Pharaoh* King of *Ægypt* willed *Joseph* to go up into the Land of *Cannan* to bury his father according to his oath made to his father.

Phil. Methinketh these so terrible and fearful examples of Gods vengeance against swearers and blasphemers, should strike some terrour into the hearts of our blasphemers.

Theol. One should think so indeed, if any thing could do it. But, alas, they are so hardned in it, and in all other sin, that nothing can move them, except peradventure there were a law made, that every swearer and blasphemer should hold his hand a quarter of an hour in boyling lead. This or some such like severe Law might peradventure curb them a little, and make them bite in their oaths. But otherwise they will never fear any thing, till they are in Hell-fire, when it will be too late to repent,

Phil. What may be the cause of this so often and great swearing? for surely it is no inherent and in-bred sin in our nature as some of the other sins be.

Theol. No verily. But these three I do judge to be the causes of it. Custom. Want of admonition. Want of punishment.

Phil. What then are the remedies of it?

Theol. The remedies are these.

Dis-use. Prayer. Freindly admonition. Some sharp law.

Phil. Well Sir, now we have heard enough of swearings: pray you proceed to the next sign of condemnation, which is lying.

Theol. Swearing and lying be of very neer kindred; for he that is a common swearer, is for the most part a common lyer also: For he that maketh no conscience of swearing, will make no conscience of lying. And as the Lord hateth the one, so also he hateth the other: and as he punisheth the one, so will he punish the other. Therefore *Solomon* saith *Pro. 12. 22.* lying lips are an abomination to the Lord. *Rev. 22. 15.* Saint *John* saith, Without shall be dogs, enchanterers, whore-mongers, murderers, and whoso-ever loveth or maketh lyes. *Rev. 21. 8.* Again, the same holy man of God saith, The liers shall

have their part and portion in the Lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

Phil. These Scriptures which you alledge, do manifestly declare, that God abhorreth lyers and hath reserved great torments for them. Therefore the Princely Prophet David saith, That he would banish all Lyers from his house. Ps. 101. 7. He that telleth lyes, (saith he) shall not remain in my sight. Prov. 6. 16, 17: A lying tongue is one of the things which God doth hate, and his soul abhor. Jer. 9. Yet for all this, we see by lamentable experience, how many have even taught their tongues to lye, (as the Prophet saith) and there is no truth in their lips. This vice is almost common as swearing. For it is hard to find a man that will speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth from his heart, in simplicity and plainness, at all times, in all places, and amongst all persons, without glosing or dissembling, either for fear, gain, flattery, or pleasing, hiding of faults, or any sinister respect whatsoever. Where I say, is this man to be found? I would fain see him. I would fain look upon such a man; It would do my heart good to behold him: I would rejoyce to set mine eyes upon such a man.

Theol. Such a man as you speak of, is hardly to be found amongst the sons of men. They be black Swallows in the earth, they be white Crows, they be rare-birds. For there be very few that will speak the truth from their heart: yet some such I hope there be. But for the most part, and amongst the greater sort, lying, dissembling and fraud, do bear all the sway. There is no truth, no honesty, no conscience, no simplicity, no plain dealing amongst men in these most corrupt times. Faith and Truth are parted clean away. And as the Kingly Prophet saith, The faithful are failed from among the Children of men. They speak deceitfully every one to his Neighbour; flattering with their lips, and speaking with a double heart. Ps. 12. 1, 2. Men now adays study the art of Lying, Flattering, Fawning, Glosing and Dissembling: they have a heart and a heart. They have honey in their mouth, and gall in their heart. Their tongues are as soft as butter and oyl: but their hearts are full

bitterness, poyson and wormwood. They are full of outward courtesie and Civility, full of Court-holy-water, when there is no Truth nor plainness in their inward affection. They will speak you fair, when they would cut your throat. They will shew you a good Counsellor, when they would eat your heart with Garlick. In outward shew they will carry themselves plausibly, when their hearts are full of venome and malice. This Viperous brood do but watch their times and opportunities, till they can get a man upon the hip; and then they will sting him, and work their malice upon him. These fawning curs will not bark, till they bite, they will lurk and lye close, till they spie their vantage, and then they will shew themselves in their kind: then they will hoyst a man, and turn him over the perk, if they can. These men are like the waters, which are most deep when they are most calm; like a dangerous rock hid under a calm Sea, or as the Heathens say, Like the Syrens Song, which is the Sailers wrack: like the Fowlers whistle, which is the birds death: like the hid bait, which is the fishes bane: like the Harpies, which have Virgins faces, and Vultures talons; or like *Hyena*, which spreadeth like a friend and devoureth like a foe; or, as the Scripture saith, Like *Joab*, (2 Sam. 20. 10.) the Caprain of the Host, which spake kindly to *Amasa* another Caprain, and kissed him, when presently he stabb'd him: or like unto the *Herodians* and Pharisees servants, which came to our Lord *Jesus* with many fawning insinuations, calling him Good Master, and telling him that he was the plain truth, that he taught the way of God truly, he regarded not mans person, and many good morrows, and all this geer, when as in very deed their purpose was to entangle him in his words and to entrap him, that they might catch advantage against him, and so cut his throat and give him pap with a hatchet. This is it which the wise man saith, Pro. 29. 5. *A man that flattereth his neighbour, spreadeth a net for his feet.* And again, Pro. 26. 23. *As silver-dross over-laid upon an earthen pot: so are fawning lips and an evil heart.* And in another place

he saith, Pro. 26. 23. to 27. *He that beareth hatred, will counterfeite with his lips : but he layeth up deceit in his heart : when he shall shew his voice favourably, trust him not ; for there are seven abominations in his heart. He will cover hatred by deceit : but his malice shall be discovered in the Congregation. In another place he pronounceth a curse upon all these hollow-hearted Hypocrites, and meal-mouthed flatterers. For saith he, Unto him that blesseth his friend with a loud voice, betimes in the morning, rising up early, a curse shall be imputed.*

Phil. You have very well described the conditions of the men of this age, which have faces, countenances, and tongues, but no hearts ; which profess lying and dissembling which say, He cannot live that cannot dissemble ; which have fair faces, and false hearts ; which have forgotten that plain honesty is deep policy.

Theo. The Holy Ghost often in the Proverbs of Solomon, calleth all unregenerate men fools: or as it is in the Hebrew, men without hearts. Because they have no heart to God, no heart to his word, no heart to his Children, no heart to Godliness, no heart to any thing that good is : they are without an honest heart, an upright heart, a plain heart : they are all in words, nothing in deeds : they promise mountains, and perform mole-hills : they will speak well of religion, and practise nothing : they will give fair words to their friends, and do just nothing for them.

Phil. The World is full of these masked counterfeits, and lying and dissembling did never more abound

Theo. It is too true, that lying and dissembling are most rife, and over-common vices amongst all sorts of men: but especially it doth over-flow & super-abound in shop-keepers and servants. For both these make a trade and occupation of it : they can do no other but lye. It cleaveth unto them as a nail to the door.

Phil. I do certainly know some shop-keepers, which utter their bad wares, and to blind the eyes of the simple do trade in lying all the day long, from Sun to Sun, from the opening of the shop and Windows, to the shutting of the same. And what is their life (if customers come in apace)

but swearing, lying, dissembling, and deceiving? They will lye as fast as a dog will trot; as we say. It is a wonder that their shops and all their wares do not fire over their heads, for their so common, so lewd, and so abominable lying: and that against their own knowledge, against their Conscience, against God, against their neighbour, against Heaven and Earth, Men and Angels.

Theol. True it is, we may marvel at the long suffering of God in this behalf. But this is to be noted, that God doth not immediately punish all notorious sinners in this life, but reserveth thousands to the judgment of the great day. In this life he only culleth out some few whom he smiteth for the example of others, that they might fear and tremble, and learn by others mens harms to beware.

Therefore even in this life, we see before our eyes some lyers, some drunkards, some whoremongers, some swearers, some misers of the world, some ruffians, cut-throats, stricken down by the revenging hand of God: but whereas God smiteth one of these in this life, he letteth an hundred escape. For if he should punish all Offenders in this life, to what purpose should the judgement serve? If he should punish none, then we should think there were no God or that he were shut up idle in Heaven, and would do neither good or evil, nor once meddle in the matters of the Earth; as some Epicures have dreamed. Therefore to avoid both these extremities, God in his Heavenly wisdom hath thought good to meet with some even in this world.

Phil. I am of this mind, that the goods which men get by swearing, lying, and deceit, will never prosper.

Theol. You are not therein deceived, For God will blow upon all such kind of evil-gotten goods, and they shall be put in a bottomless purse, as the Prophet saith. The Holy Ghost in the book of the Proverbs, hath many excellent sayings to this effect; as chap 13. 11. *The riches of vanity shall be diminished; but he which laboureth with the hand shall increase them.* (Hag. 1.6.) And Again, *He that dealeth deceitfully shall become poor: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich.*

(Prov. 10. 4.) In another place he saith. *The deceitful man roseth not that which he hath caught in hunting.* (Pro. 12. 27.) That is, he shall not long enjoy or taste the prey, which he hath gotten by fraud. For either one trouble or other will come upon him, that he shall not be able to possess or take delight in the spoil. Therefore it is said, *The bread of deceit is sweet to a man: but after, his mouth shall be filled with gravel.* That is, in the end the crafty person shall meet with many troubles. For either his conscience will upbraid him and check him, or vengeance will plague him for his deceit. The fears, cares, and sorrows which he shall have, shall be as it were so many sharp stones to set his teeth on edge, and to vex him. Wherefore instead of meat, he shall feed on gravel; and instead of wheat, on pebble stones. Small pleasure is taken in the end, in goods ill gotten, or livings unlawfully come by. For the Holy Ghost hath passed sentence upon them, that they shall never prosper.

Phil. *It sometimes falleth out, that they prosper for a time: but as we say, the third heir shall never enjoy them. For God will curse them in their posterity: and our childrens children shall feel the smart of our sins.* Therefore the holy man Job saith; *The off-spring of the wicked shall not be satisfied with bread.* (Job 27. 14.) For out of doubt God will bless that only which is got with a good conscience, in the works of our calling; and it shall remain blessed unto us, and our posterity. Therefore the Spirit saith, *The just man, that walketh in his uprightness, is blessed, and blessed shall be his children after him.* (Prov. 20. 7.) But God will not bless, but curse that which is got with an evil conscience; as swearing, lying, dissembling, deceiving, &c.

Theol. Some ancient Writers have spoken very prudently to this point. For one saith, *injusta lucra breves habent voluptates, longos autem dolores*: [Jerom.] That is, unjust gain hath long sorrow, and short joy. Another saith, *Eligas damnum potius quam turpe lucrum: illud enim semel tantum te dolore afficiet, hoc vero semper*: [August] That is, Choose loss, rather than filthy lucre; for the one will grieve thee but once, the other for ever.

ever. A third saith, *Melius est honeste pauperem, esse, quam turpiter divitem* : *Hoc enim commiserationem, illud vero reprehensionem adfert* : [Bernar.] It is better to be honestly poor, than wickedly rich. For the one moveth pity, the other reproof. One of the wise Heathens also saith, [Eurip. Phenef.] We may not wax rich unjustly, but live of just things which he calleth holy things.

Phil. Have we not examples in the Scriptures of such as have been punished for lying?

Theol. Yes, for we read how the Gibeonites, for their lying and dissembling were made drudges and slaves to the Israelites, (Jof. 9. 23.) Gebezi also the servant of Elisha the Prophet, for his lying and covetousness together, was smitten with a most grievous leprosie (2 Kings 5. 27.) Ananias and Saphira his Wife for their own lying and dissembling were stricken down stark dead by the immediate hand of God, by the rebuke of Peter. (Act. 5. 10.)

Zophar, one of Job's Friends, speaking of these kind of men, saith, *They shall suck the gall of Asps, and the Vipers tongue shall slay them. They shall flie from the iron weapons, and a bow of steel shall strike them thorow,* (Job 20. 16. 24.)

Now then by all these examples, we may plainly see, how greatly God abhorreth lying and dissembling.

Phil. O therefore that we could follow the counsel of the Apostle, who saith, *Lye not one to another* : (Col. 3. 9.) sith you have put off the old man with his works. And again, *Cast away lying, and speak every one the truth to his neighbour.* (Eph. 4. 25.) The manner of speech which the Apostle useth, is very forcible, implying thus much, That we should in a kind of disdain or detestation cast it away and throw it from us, as a filthy, stinking and berayed clout hanging about a mans neck, which he doth suddenly snatch away, and hurl into the fire; as being ashamed that ever it should be seen or known. Would to God therefore that we were come to such a detestation and loathing of lying, that we would even spattle at it; and cry, *Fie upon it, and all that use!* O that we could hate

hate it as the Devil, which is the Father of it ; and as Hell-fire, which is the reward of it ; O that we were come but so far as the Heathen man, [Homar. Iliad. 3.] who saith, I hate him as the gates of Hell, who had one thing in his tongue, and another in his heart.

Antil. Yet for all this, we find in the Scriptures, that even some of the godly have been taken tardy in lying, and yet have not sinned in so doing ; as Abraham, Jacob, Rahab, the Midwives of Egypt ; and therefore why may not we do so too.

Theol. I told you before, that you may not make the infirmities of God's people, rules for you to live by. And further I answer, that all these did offend in their lying. Some of them indeed, I grant are commended for their love to the Church, and charitable affections to God's people, but none of them simply for lying, which is a thing condemned even of the Heathen. For saith one of them, [Eurip. Phenis.] Lying doth corrupt the life of man, and every wise and godly man doth hate lying.

Antil. But may not we lye now and then for advantage.

Theol. No verily : neither is there any good advantage to be got that way. For when you have made up your accounts, all charges deducted, and all expences defrayed, your clear gains will be very small. For by your wilful and customary lying, you gain inward grief, and lose true joy : you gain short pleasure and lose perpetual glory ; you gain Hell, and lose Heaven ; you make the Devil your friend, and God your enemy.. Now then reckon your gain.

Phil. I pray you let us grow towards a conclusion of this point : and shew us briefly the chief causes of lying.

Theol. The chief causes of lying are these ; Custom, Fear, Covetousness, The Devil.

Phil. What be the Remedies ?

Theol. The remedies be these : Dis-use, Godly boldness. Contentration, Earnest Prayer.

Phil. You have spoken enough of this vice, to cause all such to abhor it, and forsake it, as have any drop of

grace, or spark of God's fear in them : but as for them filthy, let them be more filthy. Now, I pray you, speak your judgment of the seventh sign of condemnation which is drunkenness.

Theol. It is so brutish and beastly a sin, that a man would think it should not need to be spoken against : but that all reasonable men should even abhor it, and quake to think of it. For it is a most swinish thing, it maketh of a man a beast : it taketh away the heart of man from all goodness, as witnesseth the Prophet *Hosea* chap. 4. 11. saying, *whoredom, wine and new wine, take away the heart.* For what heart, what stomach, what appetite, can whoremongers and Drunkards have to any thing that is good ? either to hear, or to read the Word of God, or to pray, or to meditate in the same ? Alas, they are far from it, far from God, and far from all grace, and goodness. Therefore the Prophet *Joel*, saith, *Awake ye drunkards : weep and howl ye drinkers of wine.* (*Joel* 1. 5.) Yea, the mighty God of heaven doth pronounce a woe against them, saying, *Wo unto them that rise up early to follow drunkenness : and to them that continue untill night, till the wine do inflame them,* (*Isa.* 5. 11.) Our Lord Jesus giveth us a caveat to take heed of it : *Take heed* saith he, *that your hearts be not overcome with surfeiting and drunkenness, and the cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.* (*Luk.* 12. 34.) Thus you hear how both Christ himself, and sundry of the Prophets do thunder down from Heaven against this gross beastliness, which now aboundeth and reigneth amongst the Sons of men.

Phil. True indeed : but yet almost nothing will make men leave it ; for it is a most rife and over-common Vice. We see many that think themselves some bodies, (and, as we say, no small fools) which yet will be overtaken with it, and thereby lose their credit and reputation with all wise men : yea, do prove themselves to be but swine, and brute beasts : as the Holy Ghost avoucheth, saying, *Wine is a mocker, and strong drink is raging. Whosoever is deceived therein, is not wise.* (*Prov.* 20. 21.)

Theol.

Theol. The wise King in the same book doth most notably and fully describe unto us the inconveniencies and mischiefs which do accompany drunkenness, and follow drunkards at the heels. To whom (saith he) is wo? to whom is alas? to whom is strife? to whom is babbling? to whom are wounds without cause? to whom is the redness of the eyes? Even to them that tarry long at the wine; to them that go and seek out mixt wine. (Prov. 23. 29.) In the same Chapter he saith, Be not of the number of them which are bibbers of Wine, or of them which glut themselves with flesh; for the drinker and the feaster shall become poor; and the sleeper shall be clothed with rags. (Prov. 23. 20, 21.) Moreover he saith, Their eyes shall behold strange women; and that they shall be like him that lyeth in the midst of the sea, and sleepeth in the top of the mast, (Prov. 23. 33.) In all these speeches the Holy Ghost doth in most lively manner, describe unto us the properties of drunkards; even their staggering, their reeling, their snorting, their senseless sensuality. Behold then, what be the cursed fruits and events of drunkenness: even these which follow; wo, alas, grief, misery, beggery, poverty, shame, lust, strife, babbling, brawling, fightings, quarrelling, surfeiting, sickness, diseases, swinish sleeping, security and sensuality. So then I conclude that drunkenness is a vice more befitting an hog, than any reasonable man. And as one saith; It is the Metropolitan City of all the Province of vices. Well therefore saith the Heathen writer, [Democritus.] When the wine is in, a man is as a running coach without a coach-man.

Phil. Let us hear what executions have been done upon drunkards in former ages, that now men may learn to take heed by their examples.

Theol. Ammon; one of David's ungracious children being drunk, was slain by his Brother Absalom. (2 Sam. 13. 29.) Benhadad King of Syria being drunk, was discomfited by Ahab, King of Israel. (1 King 20. 20.) Elah, King of Israel, being drunk, was slain by Zimri his Servant, and captain of his Chariots; who also

suc-

succeeded him in the Kingdom. 1 K. 6. 10. Lot being drunk, committed incest with his own daughters: and therefore was punished in his posterity. Gen. 19. 37. Thus we see what executions have been done even upon Kings, for this kind of sin. Therefore let men learn once at last to shun vice, and embrace vertue; and as the Apostle saith, to make an end of their *salvation with fear and trembling*. For all our shifts and starting-holes will serve to no purpose in the end, but when we have fished hither and thither never so much, yet at the last, we must be fain to be shut up in God's wrath.

Antil. What I pray you, do you make it so great a matter if a man be a little overtaken with drink now and then? There is no man but he hath his faults: and the best of all us may be amended. If neighbours meet together now and then at the Ale-house, and play a game at *Maw* for a pot of Ale, meaning no hurt: I take it to be good fellowship, and a good means to encrease love amongst neighbours; and not so hainous a thing as you make it.

Theol. I see you would fain make fair weather of it and smooth over the matter with sweet words, as though there were no such great evil in it. But howsoever you mince it, and blanch it over, yet the Apostle saith flatly, that *Drunkards shall not inherit the Kingdom of God*; (1 Cor. 6. 10.) I think this one sentence is enough to amaze and strike through the hearts of all drunkards in the world: for it is as much in effect, as if the Apostle had said; All drunkards are notorious reprobates and hell-hounds; branded of Satan, and devoted to perpetual destruction and damnation.

But you say, you mean no ill. I answer; Whatsoever you mean, your actions are nought, and your fellowship as bad. For what good meaning can you have, or what good fellowship call you it, for poor labouring men, artificers, and such like, to sit idle all the day long in Taverns, and Ale-houses, mis-spending their time, and their money, in gaming, rioting, swearing, staring, swilling, bezzellings, bibbing, brawling and babbling; There is no true fellowship in it; it is meer impiety,

impiety, If we may call it impiety ; for poor men to live idly, dissolutely, neglecting their callings, while their poor wives and children sit crying at home for bread, being ready to starve, to beg or to steal. I pray you speak your conscience, what good fellowship is there in this ?

Antil. Yet for all that, there be some which abstain from Ale-houses, and yet are as bad as any other. For they will back-bite and slander their neighbours ; they will do them a shrewd turn, as soon as any other ; they are envious, they censure us, and disdain our company, yet we think our selves as good as they, for all their shews of holiness.

Theol. You speak more than you know or can justify, against some better than your self. But if it were so, you should not justify one sin by another, a lesser by a greater ; which is to no purpose.

Antil. Will you then condemn all good fellowship ?

Theol. No, no : I do greatly allow godly and Christian fellowship : and acknowledge it to be one of the chiefest comforts we have in the world. I know we are commanded to love brotherly fellowship, 1 Pet. 2. 17. But as for your pot-companionship, I hate it, and abhor it : for it is written, *He that followeth the idle, shall be filled with poverty*, Prov. 28. 19. And again, *He that keepeth company with banquetters, shameth his Father*, Prov. 28. 7. And in another place, *He that loveth pastime, shall be a poor man ; and he that loveth mirth and oyl shall not be rich*, Prov. 21. 17.

Phil. Good Mr. Theologus, talk no more with him, but let us draw near to the winding up of this matter, and tell us, in a word, what be the chief causes of drunkenness.

Theol. The causes are these :

Ill company.

Idleness.

Ale-houses.

A wicked humour.

Phil. Which be the Remedies ?

Theol. The remedies are these :

Avoiding of evil company.

Shunning of Ale-houses.

Labouring in your calling.

A good course of Life.

Phil.

Phil. Well Sir you have waded far enough in this point. Let us now come to the eighth sign of condemnation, which is idleness.

Theol. Concerning idleness, this I say briefly: that it is the mother of all Vice, and the step-dame of all vertues, yea it is the very bel-dame of all enormities. It is the mother of whoredom, the mother of pride, the mother of theft, the mother of drunkenness, the mother of ignorance, the mother of error, the mother of slandering and backbiting, prating and gossiping, brawling, scolding, quarreling; and what not? Idleness was one of the principal sins of Sodom, as the Prophet Ezekiel testifieth, saying, *Pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her; and in her Daughters,* (Ezek. 16. 49.) Solomon is very plentiful, in this matter: For saith he, *The sluggard lusteth and hath nought,* (Prov. 13. 4.)

And again, *The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can give a sensible reason,* Prov. 26. 16. That is, he taketh himself the wisest of many, because he spareth his body, when others take pains: he saith, *Yet a little sleep, yet a little slumber, yet a little folding the hands; and his poverty cometh like a Traveller; that is, unawares; and his necessity like an armed man; That is, strongly. Then he foldeth his hands together, and eateth his own flesh,* (Prov. 24. 33.) For, *He hideth his hand in his bosom, and it grieveth him to put it to his mouth again,* Eccles. 4. 5.

In another place the holy Ghost saith, *The sloathful man will not plough because of Winter: therefore he shall beg in summer, and have nothing,* (Prov. 26. 15.) Again, *The sloathful man is brother to him that is a great waster,* Prov. 18. 9.

Moreover, it is said, that the sluggard turns himself upon his bed, as the door doth upon the hinges, Prov. 26. 14. That is, he keepeth his bed as if he were fastened to it.

And because the Spirit will abound in this point, it is further written of the sloathful man, that he saith, *An huge Lyon is in the way, I shall be slain in the streets* (Prov. 26. 13.) That is, when any good matter is in hand,

hand, (as preaching, praying, reading, giving to the poor, &c.) then he draweth back, he shrinketh into the shell, he findeth one let or other, one excuse or other. Then profits and pleasure, business and idleness, matters at home, and matters abroad, company, and a thousand occasions will lye in his way, as so many Lyons, to let and hinder him. So then we see how lively and plentifully the holy Scriptures do paine out the lazy lubbers of this world, and sons of idleness, which are as hardly drawn to any good thing, as a bear to the stake. As for the duties of Religion, they go as lively and as chearfully about them, as a thief goeth up the Ladder to be executed for his theft.

Phil. I do plainly see, that this sin of idleness is a very gross evil, and the root of many vices; yet for all that there be a great number which think they were born to live idly, as many young Gentlemen, and such like; which imagine they came into the world for no other purpose, but to hunt and and hawk, card and dice, riot and revel; and so spend their days in pleasure and vanity. Again, there be many lazie Lozels, and lurkish Youths, both in Towns and Villages, which do nothing all the day long but walk in the street, sit upon the stalls; and frequent Taverns and Ale-houses. Many rich Citizens, especially women, do ordinarily lye in bed till nine of the clock, and then forsooth rise, and make themselves ready to go to dinner. And after they have well dined, they spend the rest of the day, and a good part of the night also, in playing, prating, babbling, cackling, prating and gossiping: so on this idle life. Many profane serving-men also do falsly suppose, that they were born only to game, riot, swear, whore, ruffle it and roist it out, and to spend their time in meer idleness. But of all these, well said the Heathen Philosopher, *Illos pariter indignatur & dii & homines, quisquis otiosus* (Arist.) Both God and men do hate the idle person.

Theol. It is a lamentable thing to see so many men and women live so idly and so unprofitably as they do. For alas, there be to many which follow no honest calling, live to no use, no body is the better for them, they do no good, neither to the Church or Commonwealth:

they

they are like Drone-Bees ; they are unprofitable burdeus of the earth. God hath no use of them ; the Church no good, the Common wealth no benefit, their neighbours no profit, the poor no releif. They imagine they came into the world to do nothing but eat, drink and sleep, and rise up to play: they think that they should spend their time in dicing and dancing, in whoredom and bravery, in gluttony, and belly-chear, in masting themselves like Hogs of *Epicurus* Heard, in pampering their panches and cramming their bellies : in fattening themselves like Boars in a Frank till they be well brawned and (as *Job* saith) *till their bones run full of marrow, their faces stout with fatness, and they have collops in their flank.* *Job* 15. 27. Oh, what a beastly life is this ! Fie upon it, fie upon it. It is more meet for Epicures, than Christians ; for swine than for men ; *Sardanapalus* and *Heliogabalus*, and such like belly-Gods, than for the Professors of the Gospel. But of all such, *Job* saith enough, *They spend their days in pleasure, and suddenly go down to Hell,* *Job* 21. 13.

Phil. But may it not be allowed unto Lords and Ladies, Gentlemen and Gentlewomen, and other great ones, to live idly, sith they have wherewith to maintain it ?

Theol. God doth allow none to be idle ; but all great and small, are to be imployed one way or other: either for the benefit of the Church or Commonwealth: or for the good government of their own houshoulds ; or for the good of Towns or Parishes, and those amongst whom they do converse ; or for the succour and releif of the poor ; or for the furtherance of the Gospel, and for the maintenance of the ministry ; or for one good use or other. To these ends, our wits, our learning, our reading, our skil, our policy, our wealth, our health, our wisdom, our authority, are to be referred, knowing this, that one day we shall come to give an account of our Baillywick, and to be reckoned withal for the employments of our Talents. For this cause *Job* saith, that, *Man is born to travel, as the sparks flie upward.* *Job* 3. 7. And God hath laid this upon *Adam* and all his

his posterity, in the sweat of thy brows thou shalt eat thy bread. Gen. 3. 19. Some do set down four causes why every man should labour diligently in his calling.

First, to bear the yoke laid upon all mankind by the Lord.

Secondly, to get the necessaries of this life.

Thirdly, to live to the profit of humane society.

Lastly, to avoid evil thoughts and actions.

St. Paul findeth great fault with some in the Church of *Theffalonica*, because they walked inordinately, that is, idly, and out of a lawfull calling, and therefore concluded, That such as would not labour, should not eat, So then, we do plainly see, that God alloweth idleness in none. For when we are idle, (as hath been shewed before) we lie open to the Devil, and his temptations, and he gets within us, and prevaieth against us. While *David* tarried idly at home in the beginning of the year, when Kings used to go forth to battel, he was soon overtaken with these two foul sins of Adultery and Man-slaughter. So long as *Samson* warred with the Philistines he could never be taken or overcome: but after he gave himself to idleness and pleasure, he not only committed Fornication with the Strumpet *Dalilah*, but also was taken of his enemies, and his eyes miserably pulled out, these examples do shew what a dangerous sin idleness is. Therefore the Holy Ghost sends us to School to the little Creature the Ant, to learn of her both to avoid idleness, and also to use Wisdom and Providence in our actions: Go to the *Pismire*, O sluggard, behold her ways, and be wise: For she, having no guide, task-master, nor ruler, prepareth her meat in the Summer, and gathereth her food in the Harvest Prov. 6. 6. And in good sooth it is wonderful to observe what infinite pains and unwearyed labour, this silly Creature taketh in Summer, that she may be well provided for against Winter. Let us therefore learn wisdom from her example: and let us set before our eyes, the Looking-glass of all Creatures. Let us consider how the Birds flye, the

Fishes

fishes swim, the worms creep, the Heavens turn, the Elements move, the Sea ebberh and floweth uncessantly : yea, the earth it self, which is the most heavy and unweildy creature of all other, yet never ceaseth his working, bringeth forth his burden in Summer, and labour inwardly all the Winter, in concocting and digesting his nourishment for the next spring. Thus we see how all Creatures are diligently and painfully exercised in their kinds. And therefore it is a great shame for us to live idley, carelesly, and dissolutely. Let us therefore learn once (at last) to fly sloth, and every one to live faithfully, diligently, and industriously, in our several callings. So shall we both keep Satan at the staves end, and also much sin out of our souls, which otherwise idleness will force in upon us.

Phil. I must needs confess that idleness is a gross vice in whomsoever it is found. But especially, in my judgment, it is most odious in Magistrates and Ministers.

Theol. That is so in truth. For they ought to be the guides, governours, Shepherds, and watch-men over the people of God. And therefore for them to neglect their duties and charges, is a most horrible thing, sith it concerneth the hurt of many. Therefore well said the Heathen Poet. [Hom. l. 2.] A Magistrate or Minister may not be lazy or sloathful, to whom the nursing of the people is given in charge. and of whom many things are to be cared for.

What a lamentable thing therefore is it, when Magistrates are prophane, irreligious, popish, vicious and negligent in the duties of their calling? And how much more lamentable is it, when Ministers neglect their studies, slack preaching, and prayer, and give up themselves, some to covetousness, some to pride, some to husbandry, some to other worldly affairs, and some to spend their time idley in Taverns, Ale-houses, gaming, rioting, and lewd company? Would to God therefore that both these kinds of publick persons would cast off idleness, and sloth, and with diligence, faithfulness, care and conscience perform the duties of their places. For it is an excellent thing for
any

any to be a good man in his place : As a good Magistrate that ruleth well, that governeth wisely, which favoureth good men, and good causes : and defendeth them : which also setteth himself against bad men and causes, and punisheth them sharply and severely : which moreover maintaineth vertue, even of a very love he beareth unto it in his heart : and punisheth vice, of a very zeal and hatred against it : and not for his credit only, or to please some, or because he must needs do it, and can do no less, or for any such sinister respect ; but even of a love to God, a care of his Glory, a conscience of duty, and a fervent zeal against sin. So likewise it is a notable thing for a Minister to be a good man in his place, to be studious in the Law of God, diligent and painful in preaching ; and that out of a love to God, a zeal of his glory, deep pity and compassion towards the souls of the people, seeking by all means possible to win them unto God ; carrying himself in all his actions amongst them, wisely, religiously, unblameably, and inoffensively. So again, it is a worthy thing to be a good rich man, which doth much good with his riches, which keepeth a good house, relieveth the poor, ministreth to the necessities of the Saints, and giveth chearfully and with discretion, where need is. So also it is a commendable thing to be a good neighbour, a good towns-man, by whom a man may live quietly, peaceably, joyfully and comfortably.

And lastly, to be a good poor man, that is humble, lowly, dutiful, painful, ready to help, and ready to please. Oh, I say, this is a most excellent and glorious thing, when every man keepeth his standing, his range, and his rank ; when all men, with care, and conscience, perform the duties of their places : when the Husband doth the duty of an Husband, and the wife of a wife : when the Father doth the duty of a Father ; and the child of a child : when the master doth the duty of a master : and the servant of a servant : when every man setteth God before his eyes, in doing those things which especially belong unto him. For herein consisteth the honour of God,

the glory of the Prince, the Crown of the Church, the Fortrefs of the Common-wealth, the safety of Cities, the strength of Kingdoms, and the very prefer-
vation of all things.

Asun. You have said well in some things : but yet I do not see, but that rich men and women may live idly, fith they have enough wherewithal to maintain it. For may not a man do with his own what he list ?

Theol. No verily. For you may not take your own knife, and cut your own throat with it : neither may you take your own Ax, and kill your own child with it. Therefore that reason is naught. Albeit therefore wealthy men and women have great plenty of all things so as they need not labour, yet let them be profitably employed some way or other : let them exercise themselves in one good thing or other. If they can find nothing to do, let them give themselves much to private prayers, and reading of the Scriptures, that they may be able to instruct and exhort others. Or else let Ladies and Gentlewomen do as that good woman *Dorcas* did, that is, buy cloath, cut it out, work it, sew it, make shirts, smocks, coats, and garments, and give them to the poor, when they have so done. For it is said of *Dorcas*, that *she was a woman full of good works, and alms-deeds which she did.* (*Act. 9. 36.*) She was a merciful and tender-hearted woman, she was the poor man's friend, she cloathed the poor and naked, she knew it was a sacrifice acceptable to God. Oh that the wealthy women of our Land, would follow the example of *Dorcas* ! But (alas) these dayes bring forth few *Dorcases*.

Phil. As you have shewed us the cause of the former evils : so now, I pray you, shew the causes of this also.

Theol. The causes of idleness are,

Evil Examples.

Bad education.

Living out of a calling.

Phil. Shew us also the remedies.

Theol.

Theol. The remedies are,

Good Education | Good examples.

Labour in youth | Diligence in a lawful calling.

Phil. Now then let us come to the last sign of damnation, which is oppression. And I beseech you, good Sir, speak your mind of it out of the Scriptures.

Theol. It is so infinite a matter, that I know not where to begin, or where to make an end of it. It is a bottomless sink of most grievous enormities. I shall enter into a Labyrinth, where I shall not know how to get out again. But sith you are desirous to hear something of it, this I say, That it is a most cruel monster, a bloody vice, a most ugly and hideous fiend of Hell. The Scriptures in very many places do cry out upon it, arraigning it, adjudging it, and condemning it down to Hell. They do also thunder and lighten upon all those which are stain'd and corrupted with this vice, calling them by such names, and giving them such titles, as are taken off from the Effects of the sin, and most fit for oppressours: as namely, *They grind the Faces of the Poor* (*Isa. 3. 15.*) that, *They pluck off their skins from them, and their flesh from their bones* (*Micb. 3. 2.*) that, *That they eat them up as they eat bread.* (*Psal. 14. 4.*) Those are they which strive to devour all, (like savage beasts) and to get the whole Earth into their hands either by hook or by crook, by right or by wrong; by oppression, fraud and Violence: these Caterpillars and Cormorants of the earth are like unto the Whale-Fish, that swalloweth up quick other little Fishes: they are like a Lyon, that devoureth other beasts, they are like the Falcon, which seizeth, plumeth, and preyeth upon other Fowls. These greedy Wolves devour all, and swallow up the poor of the Land: therefore the prophets of God do thunder out many great woes against them.

First, The Prophet *Esay* saith, chap. 5. 8. *Wo unto them that joyn house to house, and field to field, till there be no place for the poor to dwell in, that they may be placed by themselves in the midst of the Earth.*

Secondly, The Prophet *Jeremy* saith, *Wo unto him*

that buildeth his house by righteousness, and his chambers without equity. (Jer, 22. 13.)

Thirdly, The Prophet Micah saith, Wo unto them that covet fields, and take them by violence : and so oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage. (Mic. 2. 2.)

Fourthly, The Prophet Habakkuk cryeth, cut saying, Wo unto him that buildeth a Town with blood, and reſteth the City by iniquity. (Hab. 2. 12.) Saint James ſo moſt terribly threatneth theſe kind of men, ſaying, Go to now ye rich men, weep and howl for your miſeries that ſhall come upon you. Your Gold and Silver is cankerd, and the ruſt of them ſhall be a witneſs againſt you, and ſhall eat your fleſh as it were fire, (Jam. 5. 3.)

Laſtly, S. Paul ſaith flatly, that Extortioners ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God. (1. Cor. 6. 10.) Thus we ſee how many fearful woes and threats are denounced from heaven againſt the peſtilent cut-throats of the earth.

Phil. And all little enough. For they are ſteeped in their ſin, and the ſtain of it is ſoked into them, as it will hardly ever be waſhed out. True it is that you ſaid, that theſe cruel oppreſſing blood-ſuckers are the moſt pernicious and peſtilent vermine that creep upon the face of the earth; and yet I think there were never more of them than in theſe daies. For now the wicked world is full of ſuch as do ſundry waies bite, pinch, and nip the poor, as we ſee by every days lamentable experience. But you can ſpeak more of it than I: therefore I pray you lay open the ſundry kinds of oppreſſion uſed in theſe days.

Theol. There is oppreſſion by uſury : Oppreſſion by bribery : Oppreſſion by racking of Rents : Oppreſſion by taking exceſſive Fines : Oppreſſion in bargaining, Oppreſſion in letting of Leaſes : oppreſſion in letting of houſes. Oppreſſion in letting of grounds. Oppreſſion and binding poor men to unreaſonable Conditions. Oppreſſion in thruſting poor men out of their houſes : Oppreſſion in hiring poor mens houſes over their heads. Oppreſſion in taking of Fees.

Oppression by Lawyers. Oppression by Church-officers. Oppression by engrossers. Oppression by foretallers. Oppression of the Church. Oppression of the Ministry. Oppression of the poor. Oppression of Widows. Oppression of Orphans.

And thus we see how all swarm with Oppressions and nothing but Oppressions, Oppressions.

Phil. In truth, this is a most cruel and oppressing wherein we live ; yea, a very Iron age. It seems to the great ones mind nothing else : they are altogether upon oppression ; they dote and dream of it, they find sin in it, and therefore they are mad of it : As Solomon saith, Oppression maketh a wise man mad. It seems therefore, that this vice is of such marvellous force, that it bereave men of their wits, and make them stark mad getting goods by hook or by crook, they care not how, from whom, so they have it. Yet no doubt the most God hath enacted many good Laws, for the suppressing this evil, and threatneth the execution of them in his own person, and especially his Law doth provide for the safety of the poor, the fatherless, the widow, and the stranger. But you, Master Theologus, can repeat the Statutes better then I, because you are a professed Divine : therefore pray you, let us hear them from you.

Theol. In the 22 Chapter of Exodus, God made this Law following : You shall not trouble any widow or fatherless child : If thou vex or trouble such, and so he shall cry unto me, I will surely hear his cry. Then shall my wrath be kindled, and I will kill you with the sword, and your Wives shall be widows, and your children shall be fatherless.

Again he saith, Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant that is needy and poor ; but thou shalt give him his hire for his day ; neither shalt the Sun go down upon it (for he is poor, and therein he sustainer his life) lest he cry against thee unto the Lord, and it be sin unto thee, (Deut. 24, 15).

Moreover the Lord saith, Thou shalt do no injury to a stranger ; for ye were strangers in the Land of Egypt. Exod. 22, 21. And God Mal. 3. 5. himself threatneth

at he will be a swift witness against thole which keep
 the Hirelings Wages, and vex the widow and the
 fatherless. The Apostle saith, 1 *Thes.* 4. 6. Let no
 man oppress or defraud his brother in any matter. For the
 Lord is an avenger of all such things. Solomon also saith,
Eccles. 5. 8.) if in a Country thou seest the oppression of
 the poor, and the defrauding of justice and judgment; be not
 astonished at the matter: for he that is higher then the high-
 est regardeth, and there be higher than they. All these
 by Statutes and Laws, enacted and provided against
 oppressors, do plainly shew what care the Lord hath
 for his poor distressed and desolate people.
 Phil. But these oppressing hell-hounds, are such as care
 for nothing. No Law of the Almighty can bridle them;
 nothing can fear them; nothing can restrain them; they
 have made a covenant with hell and death. They are fro-
 zen in their dregs, they are past feeling. And as Job saith
Job 24. 13) These are they that abhor the light, they know
 not the wayes thereof, neither continue in the paths thereof.
 Their hearts are as hard as the Adamant. Nothing can
 move them, nothing can work upon them. There is great
 mourning out every where of the stone in the reins, which
 bleed is a great torment to the body. But there is no com-
 muning of the stone in the heart which is the sorest disease
 that possibly can fall into the soul of man: and yet in these
 times it groweth very rife. For mens hearts are as hard
 as brass, and as the nether Mil-stone, as the Scripture
 saith. For many, especially of these unmerciful and
 oppressing Tyrants, say in their hearts, God will do nei-
 ther good nor evil, (*Amos.* 6. 3.) Therefore they put the
 evil day far from them, and approach to the seat of iniqui-
 ty. They are at ease in Sion; they lye upon beds of Ivory
 and stretch themselves on their beds, and eat the Lambs of
 the flock, and the Calves out of the stall, (*Amos.* 6. 5, 6.)
 They sing to the sound of the Viol; they invent instru-
 ments of musick, like David, they drink wine in bowls
 and no man is sorry for the afflictions of Joseph: that is,
 the troubles of God's people. The Prophet *Esay* also complains
 of these kind of men, saying, They regard not the work of
 the Lord, neither consider the work of his hands. (*Isa.* 5. 12.)

And another Prophet saith, *They say in their hearts, God hath forgot, he hides away his face, and will never see us. They are so proud, that they seek not for God. They think Always there is no God: his Judgments are far out of their sight, their waies alway prosper, and therefore they say in their hearts, Tush, we shall never be moved, nor come into danger, Psal. 10. 11.*

Theol. You have spoken very well touching the steeliness and hardness of these mens hearts, who are so unmerciful to their poor neighbours, that almost none can live by them. They do so disturb and disquiet all things, that poor men can dwell in no rest by them. Therefore truly saith the wise King, *A mighty man molesteth all, and both hireth the fool, and hireth those that pass by: but the poor man speaketh with prayer.* That is, by the way of entreaty and supplication. For the poor are afraid of them: they quake when they see them, as the beasts quake at the roaring of a Lyon. Many poor Farmers, poor Husbandmen, poor Heards, poor Labourers, poor Widows and Hirelings, do quake and tremble when those greedy wolves come abroad. And, (as Job saith) *The poor of the earth hide themselves together. (Job. 24. 4)* For (alas) in their hearts they cannot abide the sight of them, they had as leewe meet the Devil as meet them, for fear of one displeasure or another. For either they fear that they will warn them out of their houses, or parley about more rent, and straiter covenants, or beg away their best kine, or borrow their horses, or command their Carts, or require a weeks work of them, and never pay them for it, or a twelve Months pasture for a couple of Geldings, or that they make one quarrel or another unto them, one mischief or another. So that these poor souls cannot tell what to do, or which way to turn them, for fear of these cruel Termagants. They are even weary of their lives. For they have no remedy for these things, but even to bear it off with head and shoulders: therefore they often wish they were out of the world, and that they were buried quick. They say, if any will

know

knock them on the head, they will forgive him. O most piteous case ! O lamentable hearing ! These poor silly Creatures are fain to drudge and noil all the year long, in Winter and Summer, in Frost and Snow, in heat and cold, to provide their Rents, that they may be able to pay their cruel Landlord at his day. For else how shall they be able to look him in the face ? Yet their rent is so rack't, that all they can do is little enough to pay it ; and when that is paid. (alas !) the poor man and his wife, and children have little left to take to, or to maintain themselves withal ; they are fain to gnaw of a crust, to fare hardly, and go thinly clad. Sometimes they have victuals, sometimes none. The poor children cry for bread, poor widows also and poor fatherless children, are found weeping and mourning in their houses, and in their streets. So that now we may with *Salomon*, Turn and consider all the oppressions that are wrought under the Sun (*Ecc. 4. 1.*) We may behold the tears of the oppressed, and none comforteth them. For the mighty ones do wrong the weaker, even as the stronger beasts do push and harm the feeble. These griping Oppressours do pinch the poor even to the quick. They pluck away from the fatherless and widows that little which they have. If there be but a Cow, or a few sheep left, they will have them. If there be a little commodity of House or Land, Oh what devices they have to win it in, and to wring it away ! These Tyrants will go as high as the bed they lye upon. They know well enough, the poor men are not able to wage law with them ; and therefore they may do what wrong they will, and shew what cruelty they list. Hence come the tears of the oppressed, hence cometh the weeping and walling of the poor. But alas, poor souls ! they may well weep to ease their hearts a little ; but there is none to comfort them : remedy they can have none. But yet assuredly, the everlasting God doth look upon them, and will be revenged. For the cries of the poor, the fatherless, and the widows, have entred into the ears of the Lord of Hosts, who

is an avenger of all such things; yea, a strong Revenger. Solomon saith, (*Prov. 23. 14.*) *Enter not into the field of fatherless, for the Revenger is strong; he himself will plead their cause against thee.* And again he saith, (*Prov. 22.*) *Rob not the poor, because he is poor; neither down the afflicted in the Gate: for the Lord pleadeth their cause, and will spoil their soul that spoil them.* We see then, that the most just God will be revenged of the unmerciful Tyrants. He will not alwaies put up their wrongs and injuries done to the poor.

In the eighth Chapter of the Prophet Amos, *He swears by the excellency of Jacob, that he will never forget any of their works.* And again he saith by his Prophet Jeremy, *Shall I not be avenged on such a Nation as this?*

Surely he will set his face against them, to root them out of the earth. For indeed they are not wont to crawl upon the face of the earth, or to draw breath among the Sons of men. It is written in the book of Psalms, that God would set these fellows, opposite against him, as a Butt to shoot at: that *he will put them apart, and the strings of his Bow shall he make against their faces,* (*Psal. 21. 12.*) Be astonished at this, O ye heavens; and tremble, O thou earth. Be ye this, O ye cruel Land-Lords, unmerciful Oppressors and Blood-suckers of the earth. You may well be called blood-suckers: For you suck the blood of many poor men, women and children; you eat it, you drink it, you have it served in at your sumptuous tables every day, you swallow it up, and live by it. And as Job saith, *The wilderness gives you and your children find,* Job 24. 5. that is, you live by robbing and murdering. But wo, wo unto you that ever you were born. For the blood of the oppressed, which ye have eaten and drunken, shall one day cry for speedy vengeance against you, as the blood of Abel cried against Cain. Their blood shall witness against you in the day of judgement; and the tears of many poor starv'd children, orphans and widows, shall cry out against you. We see the Lord revenged of Ahab for his cruel and un-

dealing with poor *Naboth*, and shall he not be revenged of you? Did dogs lap the blood of *Ahab*, and shall you escape, (1 King. 21.) No, no; you shall not escape, The Lord will be a swift witness against you, as he saith in *Ma'achy*, (*Mil. 3. 5.*) Was the Lord angry with the rich of the people for oppressing the poor, (so as the cry of the people, and of their wives, against their oppressors, was heard of the Almighty. *Neh. 5.*) and do you think you shall escape scot free? Doth not the like cause bring forth the like effect? the like sin, the like punishment? Know therefore for certainty, that the Lord hath coffers full of vengeance against you, and one day he will unlock them, and bring them forth in the sight of all men.

Know also that the timber of your houses, and the stones of your walls, which you have built by oppression and blood, shall cry against you in the day of the Lords wrath, as the Prophet *Habakkuk* telleth you, *Hab. 2. 11.* *The Stone (saith he) shall cry out of the wall; and the beam out of the timber shall answer.* Where the Prophet telleth you, that the walls of your houses built in blood, shall cry out loud and shrill, and play the Choristers in that behalf, so as they shall answer one another on either side; The one singeth behold blood; the other, Behold Murder. The one side, Behold deceit; the other, Behold cruelty. The one, Behold pilling and polling; the other, Behold covetousness. The one, Behold robbery; the other, Behold perjury. And thus you see how the stones and timber of your houses shall descant upon you. And howsoever you put on your brazen brows, and harden your hearts against these threatnings, of the most terrible God and Lord of hosts, yet one day you shall (in spite of your hearts, will ye, nill ye) be brought forth into judgement; you shall once come to your reckoning; you shall at last be apprehended, convicted, and arraigned at the Bar of Gods Tribunal Seat, before the great Judge of all the world. Then sentence shall pass against you, even that most dreadful sentence, (*Mat. 25. 41.*) *Go ye cursed into hell fire, there to be tormented*

with the devil and his angels for ever. O then, woe unto you ; For what shall it profit a man to win the whole world, and loose his own soul ? saith our Lord Jesus. Surely, even as much, as if one should win a farthing, and lose an hundred thousand pounds. For he shall be cast into hell fire which hath not given his own goods righteously gotten as our Saviour avoucheth, where then shall he be cast, that hath stolen other mens goods ? And if he shall be damned that hath not clothed the naked, what shall become of him that hath made naked them that were clothed. Oh, therefore repent in time, O ye cruel Oppressours seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near, lay aside your savage cruelty ; visit the fatherless and widow in their distress ; deal your bread to the hungry ; help them to their right which suffer wrong ; deal mercifully with your Tenants ; rack not your tents any more, pinch not the poor souls, for whom Christ dyed ; pity them, I say, but pinch them not ; deal kindly and friendly with them, remember your great accounts ; consider the shortness of your dayes and the vanity of your life : rent your hearts and not your clothes : turn unto the LORD with all your heart, with weeping, wailing, and mourning ; prevent GODS wrath with a sacrifice of tears ; pacify his anger with the calves of your lips, and with a contrite spirit ; Be grieved for that which is past, and amend that which is to come : stand it out no more at the swords point against God ; for it will not boot you to strive ; he is too strong for you. Your onely wisdom is to come in. Come in therefore, come in, ye rebellious generation ; submit yourselves to the great King ; humble yourselves under his mighty hand cast down your swords and targets, yield unto our God. So shall you escape the vengeance to come : so shall God accept you, have mercy upon you, receive you to favour, grant you a general pardon for all your rebellions, and admit you into the number of his faithful and loyal subjects.

Phil. I conceive by divers speeches which you have acknowledged

ledged, that goods got by oppression and cruelty, will never prosper long. For oppressors coin their money upon their neighbours skin; how then can it be blessed?

Theol. You have spoken a truth. For, as it hath been shewed before, that those goods which are got by swearing and lying, are cursed; so all those that are got by oppression and violence are more cursed; Therefore the Lord saith by his Prophet *Jeremy*, As the Partridge gathers young which she hath not brought forth; so he that gathers their riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his dayes; and at his end, shall be a fool; and his name shall be written in the earth, *Jer. 17. 11.*

Phil. Would to God our Magistrates and Governours would take speedy order for remedying these things, and for the redressing of such grievous enmities as are amongst us; or that they themselves would step in and deliver the oppressed from the hand of the oppressor.

Theol. Job was an excellent man for such matters. For it is said of him, that He brake the jaws of the unrighteous man, and plucked the prey out of his teeth, (*Job. 29. 17.*) Where we see how Job was a means to deliver the innocent; and to pull the Lamb out of the Lyons claws. Moreover, it is written of him in the same Chapter, that the blessing of him that was ready to perish, came upon him, and that he caused the Widows heart to rejoyce; *Job 29. 13.* that he was the eye to the blind, the feet to the lame, and the father to the poor: and when he knew not the cause, he sought it out diligently. O what a notable man was this! O that we had many Jobs in these days! VVise Solomon doth most gravely advise us all to follow Job's example in this behalf. Deliver (saith he) them that are oppressed, and drawn to Death: for should'st thou withdraw thy self from them which go down to the slaughter (*Prov. 24. 12.*) VVould to God this counsel were well weighed and practised among us.

Phil. I marvel much with what face these cruel oppressors can come before God in his holy temple to pray, and offer up their sacrifices unto him. For we see many of them, though they have such foul hands; and foul hearts

as we have heard? yet for all that, will most impudently presume to come to the Church and pray: or at least, when they are laid in their beds at nights, and half asleep, then will they mumble over their prayers, or be pattering some Pater-nosters.

Theol. Alas, alas, poor Souls? all that they do in matters of God's worship, is but Hypocrisie and dissimulation. For in truth they are not for God, they love him but from the teeth outward: their mouths are with him, but their heart goes after covetousness, and their hands are full of blood. And therefore God doth both abhor them and their prayers. For saith he, *Though they stretch out their hands, yet will I hide mine eyes from them: and though they make many prayers, yet will I not hear them. For their hands are full of blood.* (Isa. 1. 15.)

Moreover, the Holy Ghost saith, *He that turns away his ear from hearing the Law, even his prayer is abominable.* (Prov. 28. 9.) David saith, *If I regard wickedness in my heart, God will not hear my prayer.* (Psal. 66. 18.) Our Lord Jesus also affirmeth, that God hears not sinners: (John. 9. 31.) that is, stubborn, and careless sinners. So then, we may clearly see (by all these testimonies of holy Writ) what account God makes of the Prayers of oppressours, and all prophane and ungodly men: namely, that he doth hate them, and abhor them as loathsome and odious in his sight.

Phil. Now in conclusion, shew us the causes of oppression.

Theol. The causes are these.

Cruelty.

An evil Conscience.

Covetousness.

Hard-heartedness.

The Devil.

Phil. Let us hear also the remedies.

Theol. The remedies be these.

Pity.

A good Conscience.

Contentation.

Tender affections.

Much Prayer.

Phil. Now, Sir you have at large uttered your mind concerning these gross corruptions of the world, and have plainly and evidently proved them to be the deadly poysons of

the soul: so also, I pray you, satisfie us in this, whether they be not hurtful also to the body, goods, and name.

Theol. I have dwelt the longer in these common vices of the world, because almost all sorts of men are stained with one or other of them: and therefore they can never be enough spoken against. For the whole world lyeth in them, as *S. John* testifieth. (*1 Joh. 5. 19.*) If men therefore could be recovered of these diseases, no doubt there would be a ready passage made for the abundance of grace; and we should have a most flourishing Church and Common wealth: but as long as these do lie in the way, there is small hope of greater mercies and blessings to be poured upon us; or that ever we shall come to have an inward Conversation with God. For these vices blind our eyes, burthen our hearts, and (as the prophet *Jeremy* saith, *Jer. 5. 25.*) *hinder good things from us.* But touching your Petition: I must needs grant, That as these vices are the very bane of the Soul, and most certain signs of condemnation: so are they very dangerous to the Body, Goods and Name: yea, and to the whole Land, both Church and Common-wealth.

Phil. *Shew us out of the Scriptures what danger they bring to the body.*

Theol. The Lord our God, saith, That if we will not obey him, nor keep his Commandments, (but break his covenant) he will appoint over us hasty plagues, consumptions, and the burning Ague, to consume the eyes, and to make the heart heavy (*Lev. 26. 16.*) So also he saith, that if we will not obey his voice, to observe all his Commandments and Ordinances, that then he will make the pestilence cleave unto us, until he have consumed us: (*Deut. 28. 21.*) that he will smite us with the fever, with the botch of *Egypt*, with the emrods, with the Scab, and with the Itch, that also he will smite us with madness, and with blindness and with astonishment of heart. So then you see what great evils the Lord threatens to inflict upon our bodies in this life, for these and such like sins. But on the contrary, the Holy Ghost saith,

(*Prov.*

Prov. 2. 7, 8) Fear God, and depart from evil: for alth shall be to thy navel, and moisture to thy bones.

Phil. What evil do these forenamed sins bring upon us in our goods and outward estate?

Theol. They cause God to curse us in all that we set hand unto, as plentifully appeareth in the forenamed Chapter: where the Lord saith thus: If thou wilt not obey the commandments of the Lord thy God, cursed shalt thou be in the town, cursed also in the Field, cursed shall be thy basket and thy store; cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy Land; and the increase of thy kine, and the flock of thy sheep. Cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and cursed also when thou goest out. The Lord shall send upon thee cursing, trouble, and shame, in all that thou settest thy hand unto. (Deut. 28: 17.) And further he saith, That he will break the staff of their bread; that ten women shall bake their bread in one oven, and they shall deliver their bread again by weight, and they shall eat, and not be satisfied. (Levit. 26: 26.) You do therefore apparently see, that these sins will draw God's Wrath down upon us, and all that we have.

Phil. What hurt do these sins to our good name?

Theol. They bring reproach, shame and infamy upon us, and cause us to be abhorred and contemned of good men. They do utterly blot out our good name. For as vertue makes men honourable and reverend; so vice makes men vile and contemptible. This is set down where the Lord threatens Israel, that for their sins and disobedience, he will make them a Proverb and common talk; yea, a reproach and astonishment among all people. (1 King. 9. 7.) In sundry other places of the Prophets he threatens, for their sins, to make them a reproach, a shame, an hissing, and a nodding of the head to all Nations. (Ezek. 5. 15.)

Phil. I do verily thus think, that as sin generally doth stain every mans good name; which all are chary and tender of: so especially it doth blot those which are in high places, and of special note for learning, wisdom, and godliness.

Theol.

Theol. You have spoken most truly, and agreeable to the Scriptures. For the Scripture saith, *As a dead flie causeth the Apothecaries ointment to stink: so doth a little folly in him that is in estimation for wisdom, and for honour.* (Eccles. 10.1.) Where Solomon saith, That if a flie get into the Apothecaries box of Ointment, and dye, and putrifie in it, she marreth, though it be never so precious: even so, if a little sin get into the heart, and break out into the forehead of a man of great fame, for some singular gifts, it will blur him, though he be never so excellent:

Phil. Shew me this I pray you more plainly.

Theol. We observe this, in all expeience, that if a noble man be a good man, and have many excellent parts in him of courtesie, patience, humility, and love of Religion; yet if he be covetous, the common people will have their eye altogether upon that man, and they will say, such a man is a very good man, but for one thing he is exceeding covetous, oppresseth poor men, and dealeth hardly with his Tenants, keepeth no house, doth little good in the Country where he dwelleth. And this is it that marreth all.

Moreover, let a Judge, a Justice, or a Magistrate, be endued with excellent gifts of prudence, policy, temperance, liberality, and knowledge in the Law: yet if they be given to anger, or taking of bribes. Oh how it will disgrace them amongst the people! for they will say, He is a worthy man indeed, but there is one thing in him, that marreth all: he is exceeding angry and furious man, he is as angry as a wasp, he will be in a pelting chafe for every trifle: he will fret and fume if you do but blow upon him. And besides this, he is a very corrupt man: he is a great taker of bribes: he loveth well to be bribed: he will do any thing for bribes.

Furthermore, if any Preacher be a man of great gifts, the Common people will say of them: Oh he is a worthy man indeed, an excellent Schollar, a profound Divine, a singular man in a Pulpit: but yet for all that, he hath a shrewd touch which marreth all; he

he is an exceeding proud man : he is as proud as Lucifer. He hath very great gifts indeed, but I warrant you he knoweth it well enough. For he carryeth his crest very high, and looketh very sternly and disdainfully upon all other men. He is unmeasurably puffed up with over weening, and thinketh he toucheth the clouds with his head. Thus therefore we see, how the dead flies mar all, and how some sin doth disgrace a man that otherwise doth excel.

Phil. What is the cause why some one sin doth so blot and smut the most excellent men?

Theol. The reason hereof is, because such men are as a candle set on a candlestick, or rather upon a scaffold or mountain, for all men to behold and look upon. And sure it is, they have a thousand eyes upon them every day ; and that not only gazing on them, but also prying very narrowly into them to spy out the least mote ; that they may make a mountain of it. For, as in a clean white paper one little spot is soon espied, but in a piece of brown paper, twenty great blurs scant discerned : Even so in Noble-men, Judges, Magistrates, Justices, Preachers and Professors, the least spot or speck is soon seen into, but among the baser sort, and most gross livers, almost nothing is espied or regarded.

Phil. Sith the eyes of all men are bent and fixed upon such men as are of some note, therefore they had need very heedfully to look to their steps, that they may take away all advantage from them that seek it.

Theol. Yes verily : and furthermore, they had need to pray with David alwayes *Direct my steps O Lord in thy Word ; and let no iniquity have dominion over me, Psal. 119. 133.* And again, *Order my goings, that my footsteps slip not : uphold me in my integrity. Psal. 41. 12.* For if such men be never so little given to swearing, to lying, to drink, or to women, it is espied by and by : and therewithal their credit is cracked, their fame overcast, their glory eclipsed, and the date of their good name expired.

Phil. Now as you have shewed what great hurt these sins do bring upon our souls, bodies, goods or name: so also, I pray you shew what danger they bring upon the whole Land.

Theol. Questionless, they pull down the wrath of God upon us all, and give him just cause to break all in pieces, and utterly to subvert and overthrow the good estate both of Church and commonwealth; yea, to make a final consumption and a desolation of all. For they be the very fire-brands of Gods wrath, and, as it were touch-wood to kindle his anger and indignation upon us. For the Apostle saith, *For such things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.* Col. 3. 6.

Phil. Declare unto us out of the Scriptures, how the Lord in former times hath punished whole Nations and Kingdomes for these and such like sins.

Theol. In the fourth of *Hosea*, the Lord telleth his people, that he hath a controversie with the Inhabitants of the Land, (and the reason is added) because there was no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the Land. *Hos. 1. 4.* By swearing; lying, killing, stealing, and whoring, they break out, and blood toucheth blood. Therefore shall the Land mourn; and every one that dwelleth therein shall be cut off.

Here then we see what it is that will incense God against us, and cause us all to mourn. So likewise the Lord threatneth by his Prophet *Amos*, that for the cruelty and oppression of the poor, he would plague the whole Land. *Shall not the Land tremble, for this (saith the Lord) and every one mourn that dwells therein! Amos. 8. 8.*

Again the Lord saith by the Prophet *Jeremy*, Do they provoke me to anger, and not themselves to confusion of their own faces? *Jer. 7. 19, 20.* Therefore thus saith the Lord, Behold, mine anger shall be poured upon this place, upon man and beast, upon the trees of the field, and upon the fruit of the ground; and it shall burn, and not be quenched.

Again the Lord saith, *If he will not hear these words, I swear by myself, (saith the Lord) that this house shall be waste,*

waste, and I will prepare destroyers against thee, even one with his weapons, and they shall cut down thy chiefe Cedar-trees, and cast them into the fire. Jer. 22. 5.

Likewise the Lord threatneth by his Prophet Ezekiel, saying, Because you have not walked in my statutes, nor kept my judgments: therefore, behold, even I, come against thee, and will execute judgement in the midst of thee, even in the sight of the Nations; and I will do in thee that I never did before, neither will I do any more the like, because of all thine abominations. For in the midst of thee, the Fathers shall eat their Sons, and the Sons shall eat their Fathers, Ezek. 5. 7. 8. Again, by the same Prophet the Lord saith, Ezek. 7. 23. to 27. The Land is full of the judgement of blood, and the City full of cruelty. Wherefore I will bring the most wicked of the Heathen; and they shall possess their houses. I will also make the pomp of the mighty to cease, and the holy place shall be defiled. When destruction cometh, they shall seek peace, and not have it. Calamity shall be upon calamity, rumor upon rumor. Then they shall seeke a vision of the Prophet: but the Law shall perish from the Priest, and counsel from the Ancient. The King shall mourn, and the Prince shall be clothed with desolation, and the hands of the people in the Land shall be troubled, I will do unto them according unto their waies, and according unto their judgement I will judge them: and they shall know that I am the Lord. Last of all, the Lord saith by the Prophet Jeremiah, Hear O earth: Behold, I will cause a plague to come upon this people, even the fruit of their own imaginations, because they have not taken heed to my words and to my Laws, but cast it off, Jer. 6. 19. Almost innumerable places to the purpose, are to be found in the writings of the prophets: but these may suffice to prove the main point, to wit, that the just God doth punish whole Nations and Kingdoms for the sins and rebellions thereof.

Phil. Sith all these sins (for the which the Lord did execute such universal punishments upon his own people) did abound, and overflow the Land, may we not justly fear some great plague to fall upon us? and the rather,

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because our transgressions do increase dayly and grow to a full height and ripeness; so as it seems, the harvest of Gods Vengeance draweth near, and approacheth?

Theol. Wee may indeed justly fear and tremble. For if God spared not the Angels that sinned, how shall he spare us? If he spared not his own people, what can we look for? If he spared not the natural branches, how shall he spare us that are wilde by nature? are we better than they? Can we look to be spared, when they are punished? are not our sins as many and as great as theirs? Doth not the same cause bring forth the same effect? Is the Arm of the Lord shortened? Or is not God the same just God to punish sin now that he was then? Yes, yes, assuredly. And therefore we have great cause to mourn and lament, to quake and tremble, because there is a naked sword of vengeance hanging over our heads. Thus did *Jeremy*, (*Jer.* 4. 19.) thus did *Amos*, (*Amos* 5. 16.) thus did *Habakkuk*, (*Hab.* 5. 16.) when they plainly saw the imminent wrath of God approaching upon the people of *Israel* and *Judah*.

Phil. I think we may the rather doubt and fear, because the punishment of these forenamed vices is neglected by the Magistrate. For commonly when they that bear the sword of justice; do not draw it out to punish notorious offenders and malefactors, the Lord himself will take the matter into his own hands, and be revenged in his own person: which is most dreadful and dangerous. For it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God *Heb.* 10. 31.

Theol. You have spoken a truth. For if those which are Gods Deputies and Vicegerents in the earth, do their duties faithfully in punishing vice, and maintaining vertue; in smiting the wicked, and favouring the godly: then assuredly evil shall be taken out of *Israel*, Gods wrath prevented, and his Judgements intercepted; as it is written, *Phineas stood up and executed judgement, and the plague was stilled*, (*Psal.* 106. 30.) But if they (for fear, favour, affection, gain flattery, bribery, or any other sinister respect) will be two sparing

ring and remiss in punishing gross offenders, and be rather ready to smite the righteous, then do they exceedingly provoke God's wrath against the Land and against themselves.

Phil. One thing I do greatly lament; that there be either none at all, or very slender censures, either by the Civil or Ecclesiastical Authority, for divers of these fore-named vices; as pride, covetousness, oppression, lying, idleness, swearing, &c.

Theol. It is a thing to be lamented indeed. For where do we see a proud man punished, a covetous man punished, an oppressor punished, a swearer punished, a lyer punished, an idle person punished? Now, because they know they cannot, or shall not be punished, therefore they are altogether hardened, and embolden'd in their sins, as the wise man saith, *Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the hearts of the children of men are fully set in them to do evil.*

Phil. One thing I do much muse at, wherein also I desire to be further satisfied, viz. what is the cause, that under so Godly a Prince, so many good Laws, and so much good preaching and teaching, there should notwithstanding be such an excess and overflowing of Sin in all Estates?

Theol. The causes hereof are divers and manifold. But I will nominate four especial ones in my judgment: The first is, mans natural corruption; which is so strong, as almost nothing can bridle it. The second is, ill presidents, and external provocations to evil. The third is, the want of teaching in many congregations in the Land: by reason whereof, many know not sin to be sin. The last reason is, the corruption and negligence of some such as are in authority.

Phil. Doth not this inundation and overflowing of sin, with the impunity of the same, prognosticate great wrath against us.

Theol. Yes undoubtedly, as it hath in part been shewed before. And there be divers other presages of wrath, though not of the same kind, which be these,
1. Unthankfulness for the Gospel. 2. The abuse of

our long peace. 3. Our secret Idolatries: 4. Our general scurity. 5. Our ripeness in all sin. 6. Our abuse of Gods Mercy. 7. Our abuse of his long patience, 8. The coldness of Professors. 9. Our not profitting by former judgements: as pestilence, famine death, and the shaking of the sword.

Phil. *This last I take to be a special token of approaching vengeance: that we have not profited by former warnings.*

Theol. True indeed. For it is an ordinary thing with God when men will not profit by mild corrections, and common punishments, then to lay greater upon them. And when a former trouble doth us no good, we are to fear a final consuming trouble. For so we read in the prophecy of *Hosea*, that at the first God was to Ephraim as a moth, and to Judah as rottenness, (*Hos. 5. 12.*) but afterward, when as they profited not by it, he was to Ephraim as a Lyon, and to Judah as a Lyons whelp. So the Lord saith in another place, That if they will not come in and yield obedience at the first call of his wrath, then he will punish them seven times more, (*Lev. 26. 18.*) but if they continue in their stubbornness, then he threatneth to bring seven times more plagues upon them, according to their sins, (*Ver. 21.*) If by all these they would not be reform'd, but walk stubbornly against him, then he threatneth, Yet seven times more for their sins, (*ver. 24.*) and the fourth time, Yet seven times more. The proof hereof we have in the the Book of the Judges, where we read how the people of *Israel* for their sins were in subjection to the King of *Aram-Naharaim* eight years: *Judg. 3. 8.* afterward because they profited nothing by it, but returned to their old sins, therefore they served *Eglon* King of *Moab* eighteen years, (*Judg. 3. 14.*) After that again, for their new sins and provocations, the Lord gave them up into the hands of *Midian* seven years, *Judg. 6. 1.*

After all this, for the renewing of their sins, the Lord sold them into the hands of the *Philistins* and the

Amonites, (*Judg.* 10. 7,8.) which did grievously vex and oppress them for the space of eighteen years. Last of all, we read, that when neither famine nor pestilence could cause them to return unto him, then he delivered them up to the Sword of their enemies, and held them in Bondage and Captivity threescore and ten years. After all this, when they were delivered out of Captivity, and returned home safely to their own Nation, and enjoyed some good time of peace and rest yet at last, they fell to the renewing of their sins; and therefore the Lord plagued them most grievously by the divided Greek Empire, (*Ezek.* 38.) even *Magog* and *Egypt* *Seleucia* and *Lagida*, and that by the space almost of three hundred years. And this is it that the Prophet *Hosea* did fore-tell, (*Hos.* 3.4.) that the which of Israel should remain many dayes without a King, and without a Prince; without an Offering, and without an Image, without an Ephod, and without a Teraphim.

Phil. You have very largely laid open this last token of vengeance; to wit, that God at the first doth but beat us upon the coat; but if we continue in sin, he will whip us on the bare skin; and if men will not yeild at the first gentle strokes then he will strike harder and harder, till he hath broken our stout stomachs, and made our great hearts come down, Therefore it is good yeilding at the first, for we shall get nothing for our sturdiness against him. We do but cause him to double his strokes and strike us both side-long and over-thwart: for he cannot endure that we should gruntle against him with stubborn sullenness. But now to the point. Sith there are so many presages and fore signs of Gods wrath, I pray you, shew what it is that stayeth execution, and the very downfall of the same.

Theol. The prayers and tears of the faithful, are the special means that stay the hand of God from striking of us. For the prayers of the righteous are of great force with him; even able to do all things. *St. James* saith, That the prayer of a righteous man availeth much, if it be fervent, (*James* 5.16.) and bringeth the example of *Elias* to prove it. For saith he, Though *Elias*

was a man subject to the like passions that we be, yet was he able by his prayers both to open and shut the Heavens. Abraham likewise prevailed so far with God by his prayers for Sodom, that if there had been but ten just men found in it, it had been spared, Gen. 18. 32.

The Almighty God saith by his Prophet, *Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet mine affections could not be toward this people. (Jer. 15. 1.)* Which doth plainly shew that Moses and Samuel might have done much with him, had not he been so fully bent against his People for their Sins as he was. So likewise he saith in the Prophecie of Ezekiel, *Though these three men, Noah, Daniel and Job were amongst them, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, (Ezek. 14. 14.)* Which also sheweth, that if there had been any possible entreating him for the Land, these three men might have done it, but now he was resolutely determined to the contrary. In respect therefore that the zealous Preachers, and true Professors of the Gospel, do so much prevail with God by their prayers, they are said to be the defence and strength of Kingdoms and Countreys, of Churches and Commonwealths as it is said of *Elijah*, that he was the Chariot of Israel and the Horsemen thereof; *Elisha* also was environed with a mountain full of Horses and Chariots of fire (2 King. 2. 12.) And sure it is, that *Elijah* and *Elisha* are not only the Chariots and Horsemen of Israel, but also by their prayers they do cause God himself to be a wall of fire round about it (2 King 6. 17.) as the Lord saith by his Prophet, *I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge; and stand in the gap before me for the Land, that I might not destroy it: but I found none. (Ezek. 22. 30.)* Which sheweth, that if there had been but some few to have stood in the breach, he would have spared the whole Land. This also appeareth more plainly in the Prophecie of *Jeremy*, where the Lord saith thus: *Run to and fro by the streets of Jerusalem; behold and enquire in the open places thereof, if you can find a man, or if there be any that executeth judgement, and seeketh the truth,*
and

and I will spare it (Jer. 5. 1.) Oh then mark and consider, what a man may do: yea, what one man may do: what an *Abraham* may do: what a *Moses* may do: what an *Elijah* may do: what a *Daniel*, what a *Samuel*, what a *Job*, what a *Noah* may do!

Some one man (by reason of his high favour with the Eternal) is able to do sometimes more for a Land by his Prayers and Tears than many prudent men by their counsel, or valiant men by their Swords. Yea, it doth evidently appear (in the sacred Volume of the Holy Ghost) that some one poor Preacher, being full of the Spirit and Power of *Elijah*, doth more in his study (either for offence, or defence: either for the turning away of wrath, or the procuring of Mercy than a Camp-Royal, even forty thousand strong: yea (as the Spirit speaketh) *Though they all have their swords girded to their thighs, and be of the most valiant men of Israel.* (Cant. 3. 7.) And this is clearly proved in one verse of the book of Psalms, where the Prophet, having reckoned up the sins of the people, addeth, *Therefore the Lord was minded to destroy them, had not Moses (his chosen) stood in the breach, to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy them.* (Ps. 106. 23.) See therefore what one man may do with God, Some one man doth so bind the hands of God, that when he would strike, he hath no power to do it: as it is said of *Lot*, *I can do nothing till thou be come out.* See how the Lord saith, *He can do nothing.* (Gen. 19. 22.) because he will do nothing: he doth wittingly and willingly, suffer his hands to be manacled, and bound behind him for some fews sake which he doth make more account of, than all the world besides; so precious and dear are they in his sight. Likewise it is written, That the Lord was exceedingly incensed against the *Israelites* for their Idolatrous Calf which they made in *Horeb*; Yet he could do nothing, because *Moses* would not let him. And therefore he falleth to entreating of *Moses*, that *Moses* would let him alone, and entreat no more for them. Oh (saith the Lord to *Moses*) *Let me alone that my*

wrath

wrath may wax hot against this People, and that I may consume them. (Exod. 32. 10.) Thus we see that except Lot go out of the City, and Moses let him alone, he can do nothing. O the profoundness and latitude of God's mercy toward mankind! O the heighth and depth, length and breadth of his mercy toward some! O that the most glorious and invisible God should so greatly respect the Sons of Men! for what is man, that he should be mindful of him; or the Son of Man that he should regard him? Let us therefore that are the Lord's Remembrancers, give him no rest, nor let him alone, until we have some security, and good assurance from him, that he will turn away from us the wrath which we have most justly deserved: that he will spare us, and be merciful unto us. Yea, as the Prophet saith, Let us never leave him, nor give him over, till he repair and set up Jerusalem the praise of the World: Isa. 62, 7. Least for default thereof, that be charged upon us, which was charged upon the Head of some of the Prophets in Israel, that they were like the Foxes in the waste places, that they had not risen up in the gaps, neither made up the Hedge for the house of Israel (Ezek. 13. 4, 5.) For now adays (alass) we have many hedge-breakers, few Hedge-makers; many openers of gaps, few stoppers; many makers of Breaches, to let in the Flouds of Gods wrath upon us, but very few that by true repentance go about to make up the breach, and to let down the sluices, that the gushing streams of Gods vengeance may be stopped, and stayed.

Phil. I do now plainly see, that there be some in 'high favour with God, and all as we say, greatly in his books: sith his love is so great unto them, that for their sake he spareth thousands.

Theol. It is written in the Proverbs of Solomon, that the righteous in a Land are the establishment of the Kings Throne; and the wicked the overthrowing of the same. The words are these, Take away the dross from the silver, and there will proceed a vessel for the smelter. Take away the wicked from the King, and his Throne

throne shall be established in righteousness. Prov. 25. 5.) Likewise in another place the wise man affirmeth, that the righteous are the strength and bulwarks of Cities, Towns and Corporations: but the wicked are the weakning and undoing of all. *Scornful Men* (saith he) *set a City on fire, but the wise turn away wrath: (Prov. 29. 8.)* To this purpose most excellent is that saying of *Eliphaz* in *Job*, *The innocent shall deliver the Island, and it shall be preserved by the pureness of their hands, (Job 22. 30.)* We read in the Book of the *Chronicles*, that when the Levites and the Priests were cast out by *Jereboam*, they came to *Jerusalem*, and all such as set their hearts to seek the Lord God of *Israel* came with them. (*2 Chr. 11. 14, 16, 17.*) And then afterwards it is said, they strengthened the Kingdom of *Judah*, and made *Rehoboam* the Son of *Solomon* mighty. By all these testimonies it is evident, that Princes, Kingdoms, Cities, Towns and Villages are fortified by the righteous therein: and for their sakes also great Plagues are kept back. Which thing one of the Heathens did well see into; as appeareth by his words, which are these: *When God meaneth well to a City, and will do it good, then he raiseth up good men: but when he meaneth to punish a City or a Country, and do ill unto it, then he taketh away the good men from it.*

Phil. It is very manifest, by all, that you have alledged that the wicked fare the better every day in the year, for the righteous that dwell amongst them.

Theol. All experience doth teach it, and the Scriptures do plainly avouch it. (Gen. 30. 27.) For did not churlish *Laban* fare the better for *Jacob* his kinsman? Doth he not acknowledge that the Lord hath blessed him for his sake? (*Gen. 39. 5.*) Did not *Poripher* fare the better for Godly *Joseph*? Doth not the Scripture say, that the Lord blesseth the Egyptians house for *Joseph* his sake? and that the Lord made all that he did prosper in his hand? Did not *Obed Edom* fare better for the Ark? (*2 Sam. 6. 11.*) Did not the ninety and six souls that were in the Ship with *Paul*,
speed

speed all the better for his sake? [A^d. 7. 14.) Did not the Angel of God tell him in the night, that God had given unto him all that sailed with him? for otherwise a thousand to one they had been all drowned. Therefore the children of God may very fitly be compared to a great piece of cork, which though it be cast into the Sea, having many nails fastned in it, yet it beareth them all up from sinking, which otherwise would sink of themselves. VVhat shall we say then? or what shall we conclude, but that the ungodly are more beholden to the righteous than they are aware of?

Phil. *I do think if it were not for God's children, it would go hard with the wicked. For if they were sorted and shoaled out from amongst them, and placed by themselves, what could they look for but wrath upon wrath? and plague upon plague, till the Lord hath made a final consumption, and swept them like dung from the face of the earth?*

Theol. *Sure it is, all Creatures would frown upon them. The Sun would unwillingly shine upon them, or the Moon give them any light. The Stars would not be seen of them, and the Planets would hide themselves. The beasts would devour them. The fowls would pick out their eyes. The Fishes would make war against them, and all Creatures in Heaven and Earth, would rise up in arms against them. Yea, the Lord himself from heaven, would rain down fire and brimstone upon them.*

Phil. *Yet for all this, it is a wonder to consider how deadly the wicked hate the righteous, and almost in every thing oppose themselves against them, and that in most virulent and spiteful manner. They rail and slander, scoff and scorns mock and mow at them, as though they were not worthy to live upon the Earth, They esteem every pelting Rascal, and prefer every vile Varlet before them. And though they have their lives and liberty, their breath and safety, and all that they have else by them; yet for all that, they could be content to eat their heart with Garlick: so great, so fiery, so burning and hissing hot is their fury and malice against them.*

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Theol.

Theol. They may very fitly be compared to a Man that fretteth in pieces the same cloath wherein he is bred : or to a certain worm or canker that corroded or eateth thorow the heart of the Tree that nourisheth her : or unto a man that standeth upon a bough in the top of a Tree, where there is no more, and yet with an Ax choppeth it off, and therewithal felleth down with it, and breaketh his neck : Even so the Fools of this world do what they can to chop and der the bough that upholds them, but they may know easily what will follow.

Phil. I see plainly they be much their own foes, and stand in their own light ; and indeed know not what they do. For the benefit which they received by such exceeding great ; and therefore by their maligning of the they do but hold the stirrop to their own destruction.

Theol. Now to apply these things to our selves and to return to the first question of this argument may we not marvel that our Nation is so long standing considering that the sins thereof are so horrible and outrageous as they be ?

Phil. We may justly marvel at the wonderful patience of God : and we may well think that there be some in the Land which stand in the breach, being in no small favour with his Highness, sith they do much prevail.

Theol. The merciful preservation of our most gracious King, who is the breath of our nostrils, the long continuance of our peace, and of the Gospel, the keeping back of the sword out of the Land, which our sins pull upon us, the frustrating of many plots and subtil devices which have been often invented against our State, yea, and the Life of his Majesty, most Royal person, make me to think, that there be some strong pleaders with God for the publick good of us all.

Phil. You may well think so indeed : for by our sins we have forfeited, and dayly do forfeit into God's hand both our King, our Country, our Peace, our Gospel, our Lives, our Goods, our Land, our Livings, our Wives, our Children, and all that we have : but only the righteous

(which are so near about the King, and in so high favour) do step in, and earnestly intreat for us, that the forfeitures may be released, and that we may have lease (in parley) of them all again, or at least a grant of further time. But, I pray you, Sir, are not we to attribute something concerning our good estate to the policy of the Land, the Laws established, and the wisdom and counsel of our prudent Governours?

Theol. Yes assuredly, very much, as the ordinary and outward means which God useth for our safety. For though the apostle Paul had a grant from God for the safety of his own life, and all that were with him in the ship; yet he said, *Except the Mariners abide in the ship, we cannot be safe.* (Act. 27. 31.) Shewing thereby that unto faith and prayers, the best and wisest means must be joyned. We are therefore upon our knees every day to give thanks unto God for such good means of our safety as he hath given us.

Phil. Well then, as the prayers of the righteous have been hitherto great means both for the hindring and turning away of wrath, and the continuance of favour; so shew, I pray you, what is the best course to be taken, and what in sound wisdom is to be done, both to prevent future dangers, and to continue God's Favours and mercies still upon us.

Theol. The best and surest course that I can consider or I can conceive of, is to repent heartily for sins past, and to reform our lives in time to come; to seek the Lord while he may be found; and to call upon him while he is near; to forsake our own wayes, and our own imaginations, and to turn unto him with all our hearts, with weeping, with fasting, and with mourning, as the prophet Joel chap. 2. adviseth: For our God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil. All the Prophets do counsel us to follow this course, and do plainly teach, that if we all (from the highest to the lowest) do meet the Lord with unfeigned repentance, and offer him the sacrifice of a contrite spirit, undoubtedly he will be pacified toward us, and be merciful to our transgressions. This is most plainly set

down in the seventh Chapter of *Jeremy*, where the Lord saith thus to his people. *Jer. 5. 6.* If you amend and redress your wayes and your works: If you execute judgment betwixt a man and his neighbour, and oppress not the stranger, the fatherless and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your destruction, then will I let you dwell in this place even in the Land which I gave unto your fathers for ever and ever. So likewise he saith by the same Prophet, (*Jer. 22. 3, 4, 5.*) Execute ye judgment and righteousness, and deliver the oppressed from the hand of the oppressor, and vex not the fatherless, the widow, or the strangers; do no violence, nor shed innocent blood in this place. For if ye do this thing, then shall the King, sitting upon the throne of David, enter in by the gates of this house, and ride upon Chariots, and upon Horses, both he and his servants and his people. And again, (*Jer. 22.*) O ye disobedient Children, return and I will heal your Rebellion. The Lord also saith by his Prophet *Isaiah*, (*Isa. 1. 19.*) If ye consent and obey, ye shall eat the good things of the Land, but if ye refuse, and be rebellious, ye shall be devoured with the sword. For the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it. The Prophet *Hosea* saith, (*Hos. 6. 1.*) Come, let us return to the Lord; for he hath spoiled, and he will heal us: he hath wounded us, and he will bind us up. And again, (*Hos. 13. 1.*) O Israel, return unto the LORD, (for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity) and I will heal thy rebellion, and will love thee freely: for mine anger is turned away from thee, I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the Lily, and fasten his root as the trees of Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the Olive-tree and his smell as Lebanon.

The Prophet *Micah* telleth us what is good for us, and what is our best course, and what the Lord requireth at our hands, (*Mich. 6. 8.*) namely, these four things, To do justice, to love mercy, to humble ourselves, and to walk with God. The Prophet *Amos* giveth the same counsel, (*Amos. 5. 13, 14, 15.*) saying, Seek the Lord, and ye shall live. Seek good, and not

evil. Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate. It may be that the Lord of Hosts will be merciful unto the remnant of Joseph. And the Lord himself saith, (Jer. 18. 8.) If this Nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their wickedness, I will repent of the plague I thought to bring upon them. Thus we do plainly see what advice and counsel the Prophets and holy men of God do give unto us. The sum of all is this, that If we do truly repent, and turn unto him with all our hearts, (studying to obey him, and walk in his ways) then he will grant us any favour that we will require at his hands. For even as a wool pack, or other soft matter, beateth back, and dampeth the force of all shot; so penitent, melting, and soft hearts, do beat back the shot of God's wrath, and turn away his vengeance from us. Moreover, we may observe, in all experience, that when Potentates are offended, or any great man hath conceived a displeasure against some poor man, then he must run and ride, send presents, use his friends, break his sleep, and never be quiet until he have pacified him. Even so must we deal with our God, seeing he hath taken a displeasure against us.

O therefore that we would speedily use all possible means to pacifie his wrath! O that we would with one heart and voice every one of us (from the highest to the lowest) humble our selves before our God, forsake our former evil wayes, be grieved for that we have done, and purpose never to do the like again! Oh that it might go to the hearts of us, that we have so often and so grievously offended so loving a God, and so merciful a Father! Oh that we would awake once at last, and rowse up our drowsie hearts, and ransack our sleepy consciences, trying out against our sins, that our sins might never cry out against us! Oh that we would judge our selves, accuse our selves, indict our selves and condemn our selves! so should we never be adjudged, accused, indicted, or condemned of the Lord. Oh that all hearts might sob, all souls might sigh, all loyns might be smitten with sorrow, all faces gather black-

ness, and every man smite himself on the thigh, saying, What have I done? Oh that both Magistracy, Ministry, and Commonalty, would purpose and vow, and even take a bond of themselves; that from henceforth, and from this day forward, they would set their hearts to seek the Lord, and wholly give up themselves to his obedience! Oh that all men, women and children, would fear God and keep his commandments; would eschew evil and do good: would study to please God in all things: and to be fruitful in all good works, making conscience to perform the duties of their general callings and duties of their special callings; duties of the first table, and duties of the second table; that so God might be sincerely worshipped, his Name truly revered, his Sabbaths religiously observed; and that every man would deal kindly, mercifully, justly, and uprightly with his neighbour, that there might be no complaining, no crying in our streets! Oh, I say again and again, that if all of us, of what estate, degree, or condition soever, would walk in the paths of our God, then doubtless we should live and see good dayes, all future dangers should be prevented, our peace prolonged, our State established, our King preserved, and the Gospel continued. Then should we still enjoy our lives, our goods, our lands, our livings, our wives, our children, our houses and tenements, our orchards and gardens; yea, as the Prophet saith, we shall eat the good things of the Land, spend our dayes in much comfort, peace and tranquillity, and leave great blessings unto our children and posterity, from age to age, from generation to generation.

Phil. You have fully answered my question, and well satisfied me therein out of the Scriptures; yet, I pray you, give me leave to add one thing to that which you have at large set down. The Lord saith, by the Prophet Amos. (Amos. 4. 6, 7.) that for their sins and rebellions, he had given them cleanness of teeth, that is, dearth and scarcity; and yet they did not turn unto him. Also he withheld the rain from them, and punished them with drought; and yet they did not turn unto him. Moreover he smote their

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corn, their great Gardens, their Orchards, Vineyards, Fig-trees, and Olive-trees, with blasting and mildew, and the Palmer-worm did devour them: and yet they did not return unto him. Last of all he smote them with the pestilence, and with the sword, and overthrew them, as he overthrew Sodom and Gomorrha and they were as a firebrand pluckt out of the burning; yet for all this they did not turn to him. Ye have not turned unto me, saith the Lord. But now to come to the point. Out of this I gather, that If we multiply our transgressions, God will multiply his plagues upon us: but on the contrary, if we would unfeignedly turn unto the Lord our God with all our hearts, all plagues should be stayed all dangers prevented and no evil should fall upon us. For because they would not turn, therefore he smote them. If therefore they had turned he would not have smote them. But now, I pray you, briefly conclude this point, and declare in few words what it is that doth most materially concern our peace and publick good.

Theol. These few then briefly I take to be the things which belong to our peace.

Ten things concerning our peace.

Let Solomon execute Joab and Shimei.

Let Achab and Eliab slay the Priests and Prophets of Baal.

Let Aaron and Eleazer minister before the Lord faithfully.

Let Jonas be cast out of the Ship.

Let Moses stand fast in the gap, and not let down his hand,

Let Joshua succeed him

Let Cornelius fear God with all his household.

Let Tabitha be full of good works and alms-deeds.

Let Deborah Judge long in Israel, prosper and be victorious.

Let us pray that the light of Israel may not be quenched

And this I take to be the sum of all that belongs to our peace.

Phil, The sum of all our conference hitherto, as I remember, may be reduced unto these few heads: First, mans

natural corruption hath been laid open. Secondly, the horrible fruits thereof. Thirdly, their evil effects and workings, both against our souls and bodies, goods, name, and the whole Land. Lastly, the remedies of all. Now therefore I would grow to some conclusion of that which you touched by the way, and made some mention of; namely, the sign of salvation and damnation: and declare unto us plainly, whether the state of a mans soul before God, may not by certain signs and tokens, be certainly discerned in this life.

Theol. Besides those which before have been mentioned, we may add these nine following.

Nine signs of a sound soul.

Reverence of Gods Name: Keeping of his Sabbath. Truth. Sobriety. Industry. Compassion. Humility. Chastity. Contentation.

Phil. These indeed, I grant, are very good signs; but yet all of them are not certain: for some of them may be in the reprobates.

Theol. What say you then to St. Peters signs, set down in the first chapter of his second Epistle? which are these eight.

St Peters Eight signs of Salvation.

Faith; Vertue; Knowledge; Temperance; Patience; Godliness; Brotherly kindness; Love.

Saint Peter saith, If these be in us and abound, they will make us neither idle nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus, 2 Pet. 1. 8. Which is as much, as if he had said, They will make us sound and sincere Professors of the Gospel.

Phil. All these I grant are exceeding good signs and evidences of a mans salvation; but yet some of them may deceive, and a hile may be picked in some of these evidences. I would therefore hear of some such demonstrative and infallible Evidences as no Lawyer can find fault with. For I hold that Divines can as perfectly judge of the assurance and evidences of mans salvation, as the best Lawyer can judge of the assurances and evidences, whereby men hold their lands and livings.

Theol. You have spoken truly in that: And would to

God

God all the Lords people would bring forth the Evidence of the Salvation, that we might discern of them.

Phil. Set down then, which be the most certain and infallible Evidences of a mans salvation; against which no exception can be taken.

Theol. I judge these to be most sound and infallible.

Seven infallible signs of salvation.

Assured faith in the promises, *Act.* 16. 31.

Sincerity of heart.

The spirit of Adoption.

Sound regeneration and sanctification.

Inward peace.

Groundedness in the truth.

Continuance to the end. *Prov.* 1. 20. *Joh.* 1. 41. *Rom.* 8. 14. *Joh.* 4. 23. *1 Thes.* 4. 15. *Rom.* 5. 1. *Col.* 1. 23. *Mat.* 24. 13.

Phil. Now you come near the quick indeed. For in my judgment, none of these can be found truly in any reprobate. Therefore I think no Divine can take exception against any of these.

Theol. No, I assure you, no more than a Lawyer can find fault with the Tenure of mens lands and feesimples, when as both the title is good, and strong by Law, and the evidences thereof are sealed, subscribed, delivered, conveyed, and sufficient witnesses upon the same, and all other signs and ceremonies (in the delivering and taking possession thereof) according to strict law observed. For if man have these forenamed evidences of his salvation, sure it is, his title and interest to heaven is good, by the Law of Moses and the Prophets, I mean the Word of God. God himself subscribeth to them: Jesus Christ delivereth them as his own deed: the Holy Ghost sealeth unto them: yea, the three great witnesses, which bear record in the earth, (that is, water, blood and the spirit) do all witness the same.

Phil. Now you have very fully satisfied me touching this point. And one thing more I do gather out of all your speech, to wit, that you do think a man may be assured of his salvation even in this life.

Theol. I do think so indeed. For he that knoweth not in this life that he shall be saved, shall never be saved after this life. For St. John saith, Now we are made the Sons of God. (1 John 3. 2.)

Phil. But because many doubt of this, and the Papists do altogether deny it, therefore, I pray you confirm it unto us out of the Scriptures.

Theol. The Apostle saith, We know that if our earthly house of this Tabernacle be destroyed; we have a building given us of God; that is, an house not made with hands, but eternal in the Heavens. (2 Cor. 5. 1.) Mark that he saith, Both he and the rest of God's people, did certainly know that Heaven was provided for them. For the Spirit of Adoption beareth witness with our Spirits that we are the Children of God. (Rom. 8. 15, 16.) And again the same Apostle saith, From henceforth is laid up for me; the Crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but to all them that love his appearing. (2 Tim. 4. 8.) Here we see, that he knew there was a Crown prepared for Him and for the Elect. And the same spirit which did assure it unto Paul, doth assure it also to all the Children of God. For they have all the same spirit, though not in the same measure. St. John saith also, Herein we are sure we know him, if we keep his commandments. (1 John 2. 3.) In which words St. John telleth us thus much, that if we do unfeignedly endeavour to obey God; there is in us the true knowledge and fear of God; and consequently, we are sure we shall be saved. Saint Peter saith, Give all diligence to make your calling and election sure. (2 Pet. 1. 10.) Wherefore should the Apostle exhort us to make our election sure if none could be sure of it? In the second of the Ephesians, the Apostle saith flatly, that in Christ Jesus we do already sit together in heavenly places. His meaning is not, that, we are there already in possession: but we are as sure of it, as if we were there already. The Reasons hereof are these: Christ our head is in possession: Therefore he will draw all his members unto him, as he himself saith.

Secondly, We are as sure of the thing which we hope for, as of that which we have, but we are sure of that which we have, which is the work of grace: (*John 12. 23.*) therefore we are sure of that we look for, which is the Crown of Glory. (*John, 14. 13.*) Many other places of the Holy Scriptures might be alledged to this purpose; but, I suppose, these may suffice.

Phil. As you have shewed this by the Scriptures: So also shew it more plainly by evident reason out of the same.

Theol. How can a man in truth call God his Father (when he saith, *Our Father which art in Heaven*) and yet doubt whether he is his Father or no? For if God indeed be our Father, and we his children, how can we perish: how can we be damned? Will a Father condemn his own Children? Shall the Children of God be condemned? No, no; *There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. (Rom. 8. 1.)* Again, *who can lay any thing to the charge of God's Elect? It is God that justifieth, who can condemn? (Rom. 8. 33, 34)* It is therefore most certain and sure that all such as do in truth call God their Father, and have God for their Father, shall be saved. Again how can a man say in truth and feeling, that he believes the forgiveness of sins, and yet doubt whether he shall be saved? For if he be fully persuaded that his sins be forgiven, what letteth why he should not be saved? Moreover, as certainly as we know we are called, justified and sanctified: so certainly we know we shall be glorified. But we know the one certainly, and therefore the other.

Asun. I will never believe, that any man can certainly know, in this world, whether he shall be saved or damned, but all men must hope well, and be of a good belief.

Theol. Nay, we must go further than hope well: we may not venture our salvation upon uncertain hopes. As if a man should hope it would be a fair day to morrow: but he cannot certainly tell. No, no, we must in this case, being of such infinite importance

portance as it is, grown to some certainty and full resolution. We see worldly men will be loath to hold their Lands and Leases uncertainly, having nothing to shew for them. They will not stand to the courtesie of their Land-lords, nor rest upon their good wills. They will not stay upon uncertain hopes. No, they are wiser than so. For the Children of this world are wiser in their generation, than the children of light. (*Luk. 16.8.*) They will be sure to have something to shew. They will have it under seal. They will not stay upon the words and promises of the most honest men, and best Land-lords. They cannot be quiet till they have it in white and black, with sound counsel upon their Title and every way made as sure unto them, as any Law of the Land can make it.

Are then the Children of this world so wise in these inferiour things, and shall not we be as wise in matters of ten thousand times more importances Are they so wise for earth, and shall not we be as wise for Heaven? Are they so wise for their bodies, and shall not we be as wise for our souls? Shall we hold the Rate of our immortal heritage by hope-well, and have no writings, or evidences, no seal, no witnesses, nor any thing to shew for it? Alas! this is a weak Tenure, a broken Title, a simple hold indeed.

Alun. Yet for all that, a man cannot be certain.

Theol. Yes: Saint John telleth us, we be certain. For he saith, (1 John 4.13.) Hereby we know we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. He saith not we hope, but we know certainly. For he that hath the Spirit of God, knoweth certainly he hath it; and he that hath faith, knoweth that he hath faith; and he that shall be saved, knoweth he shall be saved. For God doth not work so darkly in mens hearts by his Spirits, but that they may easily know whether it be of him or no, if they would make a due tryal. Again, the same Apostle saith, He that believeth in the Son of God, hath the witness in himself; (1 John 5.10.) That is, he hath certain testimonies in his

his own conscience, that he shall be saved. For we must fetch the warrant of our Salvation from within our selves; even from the work of GOD within us. For look how much a man feelth in himself the encrease of knowledge, obedience, and godliness, so much the more sure he is that he shall be saved. A man's own Conscience is of great force this way, and will not lye or deceive. For so saith the wise man, (*Prov. 2. 19.*) *As water sheweth face to face, so doth the heart, man unto man:* That is, the mind and conscience of every man telleth him justly (though not perfectly) what he is. For the conscience will not lye; but accuse or excuse a man, being instead of a thousand witnesses.

The Apostle saith, (*1 Cor. 2. 11.*) *No man knows the things of man, but the spirit of man that is in him.* And again, the Scripture saith, (*Prov. 20. 27.*) *Man's soul is as it were the Candle of the Lord, whereby he searcheth all the bowels of the belly* So then it is a cleare case, that a man must have recourse to the work of God's grace within him, even in his own soul: and thereby he shall be certainly resolved one way or other. For even as Rebecca knew certainly, by the striving and stirring of the twins in her womb, that she was conceived and quick of child: so God's children know certainly, by the motions and stirring of the Holy Ghost within them, that they have conceived Christ, and shall undoubtedly be saved.

Phil. *I pray you let us come to the ground work of this certainty of Salvation, and speak somewhat of that.*

Theol. The ground-work of our salvation is laid in God's eternal election; and, in respect thereof, it standeth fast and immoveable; as it is witten, *The Foundation of God standeth fast.* (*2 Tim. 2. 19.*) And again, *He is faithful that hath promised:* (*1 Thes. 5. 24.*) *Though we cannot believe, yet he abides faithful.* (*2 Tim. 2. 13.*) So then, as we know it certainly in our selves, by the consequence of election: so it standeth most firm in respect of God, and his eternal

and immutable decree. And a thousand infirmities (nay, all the sins of the world, nor all the Devils in hell) cannot overthrow God's election. For our Lord Jesus saith, (*John 6. 37.*) *All that the Father hath given me shall come unto me.* And again, *This is the Father's will that hath sent me; that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing; but should raise it up again at the last day.* And in another place our Saviour Christ saith, *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life: and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all: and none is able to take them out of my Father's hand.* (*John. 10. 27.*) We ought therefore to be as sure of our salvation, as of any other thing which God hath promised, or which we are bound to beleive. For to doubt thereof, in respect of God's Truth, is blasphemous against the immutability of his truth.

Phil. But are there not some doubts, at some times even in the very Elect, and in those which are grown to the greatest persuasion?

Theol. Yes verily. For he that never doubted, never beleived. For whosoever believeth in truth, feeleth sometimes doubtings and waverings. Even as the sound body feeleth many grudgings of Diseases, which if he had not health, he could not feel: so the sound soul feeleth some doubtings, which if it were not sound it could not so easily feel. For we feel not corruption by corruption, but we feel corruption by grace. And the more grace we have, the more quick we are in the feeling of corruption. Some men of tender skins, and quick feelling, will easily feel the lightest feather, in softest manner, laid upon the ball of their hands; which others, of more slow-feeling and hard flesh, cannot so easily discern. So then it is certain, that although the Children of God feel some doubtings at some times, yet the same do no whit impeach the certainty of their salvation; but rather argue a perfect soundness and health of their souls,

souls. For when such little grudgings are felt in the soul, the Children of God oppose against them the certainty of God's Truth and promises, and so do easily overcome them. For the Lord's people need no more to fear them, then he that rides through the Streets upon a lusty Gelding, with his sword by his side, needs to fear the barking and bawling of a few little curs, and whappers.

Phil. Shew yet more plainly how or in what respect the child of GOD may both have doubtings and yet be fully assured

Theol. Even as a man set on the top of the highest steeple in the world, and so fast bound unto it, that he cannot fall though he would, yet when he looketh downward, he feareth, because man's nature is not acquainted nor accustomed to mount so high in the Air, and to behold the Earth so far beneath: but when he looked upward, and perceiveth himself fast bound and out of all danger, then he casteth away all care. Even so, when we look downward to our selves, we have doubts and fears; but when we look upward to Christ, and the truth of his promises, we feel our selves cock sure, and cease to doubt any more.

Phil. Declare unto us what is the original of these doubts and fears, from whence they spring in the children of God.

Theol. They spring from the imperfection of our regeneration, and from that strife which is in the very mind of the Elect, between faith and infidelity. For these two do mightily fight together in the most regenerate, and strive to over-master and over-shadow one another. By reason whereof, sometimes it cometh to pass, through the prevailings of unbelief, that the most excellent Servants of God may fall into fits and pangs of despair, as *Job* and *David* in their temptations did. And even in these days also some of God's children at some times are shrewdly handled this way, and brought very low, even to death's door: but yet the Lord in great mercy doth recover them

them both from total and final despair. Only they are humbled and tryed by these sharp fits for a time, and that for their great good. For as we use to say, that an Ague in a young man, is a sign of Health: so these burning fits of temptations in the Elect, for the most part, are signs of God's grace and favour. For if they were not of God, the Devil would never be so busie with them.

Phil. Is it not meer presumption, and an over-much trusting to our selves; to be perswaded of our salvation?

Theol. Nothing less. For the ground of this perswasion is not laid in our selves, or any things within us, or without us, but only in the righteousness of Christ and the merciful promises of God. For is it any presumption for us, to believe that which God hath promised, Christ hath purchased, and the Holy Ghost hath sealed? No verily, it is not any presumption, but a thing which we all stand bound unto, as we will answer it at the dreadful day of judgement. As for our selves, we do freely confess, that in God's sight we are but lumps of sin, and masses of misery, and cannot of our selves move hand or foot to the furtherance of our salvation. But being justified by faith, we are at peace with God, and fully perswaded of his love and favour towards us in Christ.

Phil. Cannot the reprobates and ungodly be assured of their salvation?

Theol. No, For the Prophet saith, (*Isa. 57. 22.*) *There is no peace to the wicked.* Then I reason thus: They which have not the inward peace, cannot be assured: But the wicked have not the inward peace, therefore they cannot be assured. Stedfast faith in the promises doth assure: But the wicked have not stedfast faith in the Promises: therefore they cannot be assured. The Spirit of adoption doth assure: But the wicked have not the spirit of adoption; therefore they cannot be assured.

To conclude: When a man feeleth in himself an evil conscience, blindness, prophaneness, and disobedience, he shall in despite of his heart, sing this
dole-

doleful song, I know not whether I shall be saved or damned.

Phil. Is not the doctrine of the assurance of salvation a most comfortable doctrine?

Theol. Yes doubtless, for except a man be perswaded of favour of the God, and the forgiveness of sins, and consequently of this salvation, what comfort can he have in any thing? Besides his, the perswasion of God's love towards us, is the root of all our love and chearful obedience towards him; for therefore we love him, and obey him, because we know he hath loved us first, and written our names, in the Book of Life. But on the contrary, that general Doctrine of the Papists, which would have men alwies doubt and fear in a servile sort, is most hellish and uncomfortable. For so long as a man holds that, what encouragement can he have to serve God? What love to his Majesty? VVhat hope in the promises? VVhat comfort in trouble? VVhat patience in adversity?

Antil. Touching this point, I am flat of your mind. For I think verily a man ought to be perswaded of his salvation: and for my own part I make no question of it: I hope to be saved as well as the best of them all. I am out of fear for that. For I have such a stedfast faith in God, that if there should be but two in the world saved, I hope I should be one of them.

Theol. You are very confident indeed. You are perswaded before you know. I would your ground were as good as your vain confidence. But who is so bold as blind Bayard? Your hope is but fancy, and as a sick man's dream. You hope you cannot tell what. You have no ground for what you say. For what hope can you have to be saved, when you walk in no path of salvation? VVhat hope can a man have to come to London speedily, that travelleth nothing that way, but quite contrary? VVhat hope can a man have to reap a good crop of Corn, that useth no means, neither ploweth, soweth, nor harroweth? VVhat hope can a man have to be fat, and well liking
of

of his body, that seldom or never eateth any meat. VVhat hope can a man have to escape drowning, which leapeth into the Sea? Even so, what hope can you have to be saved, when you walk not in that way, when you use no means, when you do all things that are contrary to the same? For (alas!) there is nothing in you of those things which the Scriptures do affirm must be in all those that shall be saved. There be none of the forenamed signs and tokens in you. You are ignorant, profane and careless! God is not worshipped under your roof. There is no true fear of God in your self, nor in your household. You seldom hear the word preached. You content your self with an ignorant Minister. You have no prayers in your Family, no reading, no singing of Psalms, no instructions, exhortations, admonitions, or any other Christian exercises. You make no conscience of the observation of the Sabbath. You use not the name of God with any reverence. You break out sometimes into horrible Oaths and cursings. You make an ordinary matter of swearing by your Faith and your Troth. Your wife is irreligious; your children dissolute and ungracious, your servants prophane and careless. You are an example in your own house of all Atheism and conscienceless behaviour. You are a great gamester, a rioror, a spend-thrift, a drinker, a common Alehouse-hunter, a whore-hunter; and, to conclude, given to all Vice and naughtiness. Now then, I pray you tell me, or rather let your conscience tell me, what hope can you have to be saved, so long as you walk and continue in this course? Doth not St. John say, *If we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we are liers?* (1 Joh. 1.6.) Doth not the same Apostle avouch, that such as say they know God, and keep not his comandments, are liers? (1 Joh. 2.4.)

Again, doth he not say, *He that committeth sin is of the Devil.* 1 Joh 3.8. And, *Whosoever doth not righteousness, is not of God?* Doth not our Lord Jesus flatly tell the Jews, (which bragged that Abraham was their

father)

father) that they were of their father the Devil because they did his works? Doth not the Apostle Paul say, *His servants we are to whom we obey, whether it be of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?* Rom. 6. 16. Doth not the Scripture say, *He that doth righteousness, is righteous?* 1 Joh. 3. 7. Doth not our Lord Jesus affirm, that, *Not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven, but he that doth the will of my Father which is in Heaven?* Mat. 7. 21. Therefore I conclude, that forasmuch as your whole course is carnal, careless and dissolute, you can have no warrantable hope to be saved.

Phil. I do verily think that this mans case (which now you have laid open) is the case of thousands.

Theol. Yea, doubtless, of thousand thousands, the more is the pity.

Asun. Soft and fair, Sir, you are very round indeed. Soft fire maketh sweet malt, I hope you know we must be saved by mercy, not by merit. If I could do all my self wherefore serveth Christ? I hope that which I cannot do, he will do for me. And I hope to be saved by Jesus Christ as well as the best of you all.

Theol. Oh, now I see which way the game goeth. You would fain make Christ a cloak for your sins. You will sin that grace may abound. You will sin frankly, and set all upon Christs score. Truly, There be many thousands of your mind, hearing of Gods abundant mercy in Christ, are thereby made more bold to sin. But they shall know one day to their cost, what it is to abuse the mercy of God. The Apostle saith, *The mercy and loving kindness of God, should lead us to repentance,* Rom. 2. 4. But we see it leads many to further hardness of heart. The Prophet saith, *With him is mercy that he may be feared,* Psal. 137. 4. But many are thereby made more secure and careless. But to come nearer to the mark. You say you hope to be saved by Jesus Christ. I answer, if those things be found in you which the Scripture avoucheth to be in all that shall be saved by him, then you may have good confidence, and assured hope, otherwise not.

Now

Now the Scriptures do thus determine it, and set it down, that if a man be in Christ, and look to be saved by him he must be endued with these qualities following.

Nine things required of all that shall be saved by Christ.

1. He must be a new creature, *2 Cor. 5. 17.* 2. He must live, not after the lust of man, but after the will of God, *1 Pet. 4. 2.* 3. He must be zealous of good works, *Tit. 2. 14.* 4. He must dye to sin, and live to righteousness, *Rom. 6. 14.* 5. He must be holy and unblameable, *Col. 1. 22.* 6. He must so walk as Christ hath walked, *1 Joh. 2. 6.* 7. He must crucifie the flesh with the affections and lusts, *Gal. 5. 24.* 8. He must walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, *Rom. 8. 1.* 9. Last of all, he must serve God in righteousness and true holiness all the dayes of his life, *Luk. 1. 75.*

Lo then what things are required of all that shall be saved by Christ. Now therefore if these things be in you in some measure of truth, then your hope is current, sound and good; otherwise it is nothing worth. For in vain do men say, They hope to be saved by Christ, when as they walk dissolutely. The reason hereof is, because the members must be suitable to the head; but Christ our head is holy, and therefore we his members must be holy also: as it is written, *Be ye holy, for I am hol,* *1 Pet. 1. 16.* Otherwise, If we will joyn profane and ungodly members to our holy head Christ, then we make Christ a monster. As if a man should joyn unto the head of a Lyon, the Neck of a Bear, the body of a Wolf, and the leggs of a Fox, were it not a monstrous thing? would it not make a monstrous creature? Even such a thing they go about, which would have Swearers, Drunkards, Whoremongers, and such like to be members of Christ, and to have life and salvation by him. But sith you do so much presume on Christ, I pray you let me ask you a question.

Antil. What is that?

Theol. How do you know that Christ dyed for you particularly and by name?

Antil.

Antil. Christ dyed for all men, and therefore for me.

Theol. But all men shall not be saved by Christ. How therefore do you know that you are one of them that have special interest in Christ, and shall be saved by his death?

Antil. This I know, we are all sinners, and cannot be saved by any other than by Christ.

Theol. Answer directly to my question. How do you know in your self, and for your self, that you are one of the Elect, and one of those for whom Christ dyed?

Antil. I know it by my good faith in God, because I put my whole trust in him, and in none other.

Theol. But how know you, that you have faith? or how shall a man know his faith?

Antil. I know it by this, that I have alwayes had as good a meaning, and as good a faith to God-ward, as any man of my calling, and that is not book-learned, I have alwayes feared God with all my heart, and served him with my prayers.

Theol. Tush, now you go about the bush, and hover in the air; answer me to the point. How do you know certainly, and assuredly, that Christ dyed for you particularly, and by name.

Antil. You would make a man mad. You put me out of my faith, you drive me from Christ. But if you go about to drive me from Christ, I will never believe you. For I know we must be saved only by him.

Theol. I go not about to drive you from Christ but to drive you to Christ. For how can I drive you from Christ; seeing you never came near him? How can I drive you out of Christ, seeing you were never in him? But this it is, that deceiveth you and many others, that you think you believe in Christ, because you say you believe in Christ; as though faith consisted in words; or as though a man had faith, because he saith so. If every one that saith he hath faith, therefore hath faith and every one that saith he believeth in Christ, doth therefore believe; then who will not have faith? who will not believe! But in every deed your faith, and the

the faith of many others, is nothing else but meer imagination. But all this while you have not answered my question touching your particular knowledge of Christ.

Antil. I can answer you no otherwise than I have answered you. And I think I have answered you sufficiently.

Theol. No, no; you fault in your speech, your answer is not worth a button: you speak you wot-not what, you are altogether befogged and benighted in this question. But if there were in your heart the true knowledge and lively feeling of God, Then I am sure you would have yielded another and a better answer! then you would have spoken something from the sense and feeling of your own heart, and from the work of Gods grace within you. But because you can yield no sound reason that Christ dyed for you particularly and by name, therefore I suspect you are none of them which have proper interest in him, and in whom his death takes effect indeed.

Phil. I think this question would gravel a great number; and few there be that can answer it aright.

Theol. It is most certain, I know it by lamentable experience, that not one of a hundred can soundly and sufficiently answer this question, none indeed, but only those in whom the new work is wrought, and do by the inward work of the Spirit feel Christ to be theirs. I have talked with some, which are both witty, sensible and learned, who notwithstanding, when they have been brought to this very point and issue, have stuck sore at it, and staggered very much. And howsoever they might by wit and learning shuffle it over, and in a blundering sort speak reason, yet had they no feeling of that which they said, and therefore no assurance; and consequently, as good never a whit as never the better. It is the sanctifying Spirit, that giveth feeling in this point: and therefore without the feeling of the operation of the same Spirit, it can never be soundly answered. Thus then, I do close up this whole matter: As the Vine branch cannot live and bring forth fruit, except it abide in the Vine; no more can we, except

we abide in Christ, and be truly grafted in him by a lively faith : None can have any benefit by him : but they only which dwell in him : None can live by Christ, but they which are changed into Christ ; none are partakers of his body, but they which are in his body : None can be saved by Christ crucified, but they which are crucified with Christ : None can live with him being dead, but those which dye with him being alive. Therefore let us root downward in mortification, that we may shoot upward in Sanctification : let us dye to sin, that we may live to righteousness ; let us dye while we are alive, that we may live when we are dead.

Asun. If none can be saved by Christ, but only those which are so qualified as you speak of, then Lord have mercy upon us ; then the way to Heaven is very strait indeed, and few at all shall be saved. For there be few such in the world.

Theol. You are no whit therein deceived. For when all comes to all, it is most certain, that few shall be saved : Which thing I will shew unto you both by Scripture, reasons and examples.

Asun. First then let us hear it proved by the Scriptures.

Theol. Our Lord Jesus saith, (*Mat. 7. 12.*) Enter in at the strait gate. For it is the wide gate, and broad way that leads to destruction ; and many there be which go in thereat : because the gate is strait and the way narrow, that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. Again, he saith, (*Mat. 20. 16.*) Many are called, but few are chosen. In another place, we read of a certain man which came to our Saviour Christ, and asked him of purpose, whether few should be saved : To whom our Saviour answered thus : (*Luk. 13. 24.*) Strive to enter in at the strait gate. For many (*I say unto you*) will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. In which answer, albeit our Saviour doth not answer directly to his question, either negatively or affirmatively, yet doth he plainly insinuate by his speeches, that few shall be saved. For first, he bids us strive earnestly

earnestly, noting thereby, that it is a matter of great grief against the world, the Flesh and the Devil. Secondly, he affirmeth, that the gate is very strait; noting that none can enter in without vehement crowding, and almost breaking their shoulder-bones. Lastly, he saith, That many which seek to enter in, shall not be able; noting thereby, that even of them that seek, many shall step short, because they seek him not aright. *Esaïas* also saith, *Except the Lord of Hosts had left us a seed, we had been as Sodom, and had been like to Gomorah, Isa. 1. 9.* The Apostle also alledgeth out of the Prophet, that *the Lord will make a short account in the earth, and gather it into a short sum with righteousness, Rom. 9. 28. Isa. 10. 22.* These Scriptures, I think are sufficient to prove that few shall be saved.

Asun. Now let us hear your reasons.

Theol. If we come to reason, we may rather wonder that any should be saved, than that few shall be saved. For we have all the lets and hindrances that may be, both within us and without us. VVe have (as they say) the Sun, Moon, and seven Stars against us. VVe have all the Devils in Hell against us, with all their horns, heads, marvellous strength, infinite wiles, cunning devises, deep sleights, and methodical temptations. Here runs a fore stream against us. Then have we this present evil world against us, with her innumerable baits, snares, nets, gins and grins, to catch us, fetter us, and entangle us. Here we have profits and pleasures, riches and honour, wealth and preferment, ambition and covetousness. Here comes in a Camp-Royal of spiritual and invisible enemies. Lastly, we have our flesh, that is, our corrupted nature, against us; we have our selves against our selves. For we our selves are as great enemies to our salvation, as either the world or the Devil. For our Understanding, Reason; VVill and Affections; are altogether against us. Our natural wisdom is an enemy unto us. Our concupiscences and lusts do minister strength to Satans temptations. They are all in a league with Satan against us. They take part with him in every thing against us and our salvation.

tion. They fight all under his standard and receive their pay of him. This then goeth hard on our side that the Devil hath an inward part against us, and we carry alwayes within us, our greatest enemy, which is ever ready, day and night, to betray us into the hands of Satan ; yea, to unbolt the door, and let him in to cut our throats. Here then we see an huge Army of dreadful enemies, and a very Legion of Devils lying in ambush against our souls, Are not we therefore poor wretches in a most pitiful case, which are thus betrayed and besieged on every side ! All thing then considered, may we not justly marvel that any shall be saved ? For who seeth not, who knoweth not, that thousand thousands are carryed headlong to destruction, either with temptations of the world, the flesh or the Devil ? But yet further, I will shew by another very manifest and apparent reason, that the number of God's Elect upon the face of the earth, are very few in comparison ; which may thus be considered : First, let there be taken from amongst us. all treacherous Papists, Atheists, and Hereticks. Secondly, let there be shoaled out all vicious and notorious Evil-livers ; as, Swearers, Drunkards, Whoremongers, Worldlings, Deceivers, Couseners, proud men, Rioters, Gamesters and all the profane multitude. Thirdly, Let there be refused and sorted out, all Hypocrites, carnal Protestants, vain Professors, Back-sliders, Deceivers and cold Christians. Let all these, I say, be separated, and then tell me how many sound, sincere, faithful and zealous Worshippers of God will be found amongst us. I suppose we should not need the Art of Arithmetick to number them. For I think there would be very few in every Village, Town and City ; I doubt they would walk very thinly in the streets, so as a man might easily tell them as they go. Our Lord Jesus asks a question in the Gospel of St. Luke, saying, *Do you think when the Son of man cometh that he shall find faith on the earth ?* (Luk. 18.8.) To which we may answer, surely very little.

Phil. Now according to your promise, shew this thing also by examples.

Theol. In the first age of the world, all flesh had corrupted their waies, that God could no longer bear them, but even vowed their destruction by the overflowing of waters. When the flood came, how few were found faithful? Eight persons only were saved by the Ark. How few righteous were found in Sodom, and the Cities adjoyning? But one poor Lot and his Family. How few believers were found in Jericho? But one Rahab. How few of the old Israelites entred into the Land of Promise? But two, Caleb and Joshua; the rest could not enter in, because of their unbelief. The true and visible Church was small, (Heb. 3. 19.) during the Government of the Judges, as appeareth plentifully in that Book. In Eliab's time, the Church was so small, that it did not appear. In the Reign of the Kings of Israel and Judah (1 King. 20. 27.) the sincere worshippers were very few, as appeareth by all the Prophets. During the Captivity, the Church was as the Moon under a Cloud: she was driven into the Wilderness, where she hid herself. During the persecutions of the Greek Empire, by Gog, Magog and Ægypt, they were few of all. In Christ's time what a silly Company did begin withal? How were all things corrupted by the Priest, Scribes and Pharisees? In the beginning of the Apostles preaching, there were but few believers. After the first six hundred years, what an Eclipse was in the Church, during the height of Antichristian Reign? How few true Worshippers of God were in the world for the space almost of Seven Hundred years? Since the Gospel was broached and spread abroad, how few do believe? And as the Prophet saith, Lord who hath belived our report? (Esay 53. 1.) Thus then you see it is apparent, (both by Scripture reason and examples of all ages) that the number of the Elect is very small, and when all comes to all few shall be saved.

Phil. I pray you tell us how few, and to what scantling they may be reduced; whether one of a hundred, or one of a thousand shall be saved?

Theol. No man knows that, neither can I give you any direct and certain answer unto it. But I say, that in comparison of the Reprobate, there shall but a few be saved. For all that profess the Gospel, are not the true Church before God. There be many in the Church, which are not of the Church.

Phil. How do you prove that?

Theol. Out of the ninth to the Romans, where the apostle saith, All are not Israel, that are of Israel. (Rom. 9. 6.) And again, Esay cryeth concerning Israel, Though the number of the Children of Israel were the sand of the Sea, yet but a remnant shall be saved. (Ro. 9. 27.)

Phil. How do you ballance it in the visible Church, or in what comparison do you take it? Let us hear some estimate of it. Some think one of an hundred, some, but one of a thousand shall be saved.

Theol. Indeed I have heard some learned and Godly Divines give such conjectures: but for that matter I can say nothing to it. But only let us observe the comparison of the Holy Ghost betwixt a remnant and the Sand of the Sea, and it will give some light into the matter. (Rom. 9. 27.)

Phil. Doth not the knowledge of this Doctrine discourage men from seeking after God?

Theol. Nothing less: but rather it ought to awake and stir up in us a greater care of our salvation that we may be in the number of Christ's little flock, which make an end of their salvation in fear and trembling. (Phil. 2. 12.)

Phil. Some make light of all these matters. Others say, as for the life to come, that is the least matter of an hundred to be cared for. As for that matter, they will leave it to God, even as pleaseth him: they will not meddle with it. For they say, God that made them, must save them. They hope they shall do as well as others, and make as good shift as their Neighbours.

Theol. It is lamentable that men should be so careless, and make so light of that which (of all other things) is most weighty and important. For what shall it profit a man though he should win the whole world, if he lose his soul? as the Author of all wisdom testifieth, *Mat. 16. 26.*

Antil. I pray you, Sir, under correction, give me leave to speak my mind in this point. I am an ignorant man, pardon me, if I speak amiss: for a fool's bolt is soon shot.

Theol. Say on.

Antil. I do very think that God is stronger than the Devil. Therefore I cannot believe that he will suffer the Devil to have more than himself. He will not take it by his hands. He loveth mankind better than so.

Theol. You do carnally imagine, that God will wrestle and strive with the Devil about the matter. As for God's power, it doth never cross his will; for God can do nothing against his VVill and Decree, because he will not.

Asun. Yea but the Scripture saith, God will have all men saved.

Theol. That is not meant of every particular man, but of all sorts some; some Jews, some Gentiles, some rich, some poor, some high, some low, &c.

Asun. Christ dyed for all; therefore all shall be saved.

Theol. Christ dyed for all in sufficiency of his death, but not in efficacy unto life. For only the Elect shall be saved by his death: as it is written, *This is my blood in the New Testament which is given for you (Luk, 22. 20.)* meaning his Disciples and chosen Children. And again, Christ being consecrated, is made the Author of salvation to all that obey him.

Asun. God is merciful, and therefore I hope he will save the greatest part for his mercy sake.

Theol. The greatest part shall perish: but all that shall be saved, shall be saved by his mercy: as it is written, *He will have mercy on whom he will, have mercy, and whom he will, he hardneth. (Rom. 9. 18.)* And again, *It is not in him that willeth, or in him that hardneth, but in God that sheweth mercy.* Therefore though

God be infinite in mercy, and Christ infinite in merit, yet none shall have mercy, but only the Vessels of mercy.

Antil. Can you tell who shall be saved, and who shall be damned? Do you know God's secrets? When were you in Heaven! When spake you with God? I am of the mind that all men shall be saved. For God's mercy is above all his works. Say you what you will, and what you can, God did not make us to condemn us.

Theol. You are very peremptory indeed: you are more bold than wise; for Christ saith, Few shall be saved; you say, All shall be saved. Whether then shall we believe Christ or you?

Antil. If there should come two souls, one from Heaven, and another from hell, and bring us certain news how the case stood, then I would believe it indeed.

Theol. Put case two souls of the dead should come, the one from Heaven, the other from Hell I can tell you afore-hand certainly what they would say, and what news they would bring.

Phil. What, I pray you.

Theol. They would say, There be few in Heaven, and many in Hell: Heaven is empty, and Hell is full.

Antil. How know you that? how know you they would say so?

Theol. I am sure if they speak the truth, they must needs say so.

Antil. Must they needs? Why I pray you must they needs?

Theol. Because the Word of God saith so, Because Moses and the Prophets say so. If you will not believe Moses and the Prophets, neither will you believe, though one, though two, though an hundred should rise from the dead.

Antil. Yes, but I would.

Theol. I pray you let me ask you a question: whether do you think that God and his Word, or the souls of dead men, are more to be credited?

Antil. If I were sure that God said so, then I would believe it.

Theol. If his word say so, doth not he say so? Is not he and his Word all one?

Antil. Yet for all that, if I might hear God himself speak it, it would move me much.

Theol. You shew your self to be a notable Infidel. You will not believe Gods Word without signs, miracles, and wonders from the dead.

Antil. You speak as though you knew certainly the Hell is full: you do but speak at randome, you cannot tell you were never there to see. But for mine own part, I believe there is no Hell at all, but only the Hell of a mans conscience.

Theol. Now you shew your self in kind what you are. You say you believe no Hell at all, And I think if you were well examin'd, you believe no Heaven at all, neither God nor Devil.

Antil. Yes, I believe there is a Heaven, because I see it with mine eyes.

Theol. You will believe no more belike than you see, but, Blessed is he that believeth, and seeth not. (John 20. 29.) You are one of the rankest Atheists that ever I talked withal.

Antil. You ought not to judge, you know not mens hearts.

Theol. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh, Mat. 12. 34. You have sufficiently bewrayed your heart by your words: for the tongue is the key of the mind. As for judging, I judge you only by your fruits: which is lawful. For we may justly say, It is a bad Tree which bringeth forth bad fruit, and he that doth wickedly, is a wicked man. But I see you, and such as you are, that will take upon you to judge mens hearts: For though a man's outward actions be religious and honest, yet you will condemn him. And if a man give himself to the Word and Prayer, reform his Family, and abstain from the gross sins of the World, you will by and by say, He is an Hypocrite. And thus you take upon you to judge

mens hearts, as though you knew with what affection these things are done.

Antil. I confess I am a sinner, and so are all other for ought I know. There is no man but he may be amended. I pray God send us all of his grace, that we may please him, and get to Heaven at the last.

Theol. Now you will shuffle up all together, as though you were as good as the best, and as though there were no difference of sinners: but you must learn to know that there is a great difference of sinners, for there is the penitent and impenitent sinner, the careful and the careless sinner; the sinner whose sins are not imputed, and the sinner whose sins are imputed; the sinner that shall be saved, and the sinner that shall be damned. For it is one thing to sin of frailty, another thing to live in it, dwell in it, and trade in it, (as the Holy Ghost speaketh) to suck it in, as the Fish sucketh Water, and to draw it unto us with cart-ropes and cords of vanity. (*Isa. 5. 18.*)

To conclude therefore: there is a great difference betwixt a sinner and a sinner, as betwixt light and darkness. For though God's Children be sinners in respect of the remnants of sin within them, yet the Scriptures call them Just and righteous, because they are justified by Christ, and sanctified by his Grace and Holy Spirit. And for this cause it is, that St. John saith, *He that is born of God, sinneth not* 1 John. 4. 6.

Antil. What I pray you, did you never sin?

Theol. Yes, and what then: what are you the better?

Antil. You Preachers cannot agree amongst your selves; one saith one thing, and another saith another thing, so that you bring the ignorant people into a mammering, and they know not on which hand to take.

Theol. The Preachers, God be thanked, agree very well together in all the main grounds of Religion, and principal points of salvation. But if they dissent in some other matters, you are to try the spirits. Whether they be of God or no. You must try all things and keep that which is good.

Antil. How can plain and simple men try the spirits, and doctrines of the Preachers?

Theol. Yes, for the Apostle saith, *The spiritual man discerneth all things*, 1 Cor. 2. 15. And S. John saith to the holy Christians, *You have received an ointment from that holy One, and know all things*, (1 Joh. 2. 20.) that is, all things necessary to salvation. Those therefore which have the Spirit of God, can judge and discern of doctrines, whether they be of God or no.

Antil. I am not book-learned, and therefore I cannot judge of such matters; As for hearing of Sermons, I have no leisure to go to them, I have somewhat else to do. Let them that are bookish, and hear so many Sermons, judge of such matters; for I will not meddle with them, they belong not unto me.

Theol. Yet for all that, you ought to read the Scriptures and hear the word of God preached, that you may be able to discern betwixt truth and falsehood in matters of Religion.

Antil. Belike you think none can be saved without preaching, and that all men stand bound to frequent Sermons: but I am not of your mind in that.

Theol. Our Lord Jesus saith, *My sheep hear my voice*, Joh. 10. 16. And again he saith, 8. 27. *He that is of God, heareth Gods Word. Ye therefore hear it not, because ye are not of God.* You see therefore how Christ Jesus maketh it a special note of Gods children to hear his Word Preached.

Antil. But I think we may serve God well enough without a Preacher. For Preachers are but men, and what can they do! A Preacher is a good man so long as he is in the Pulpit; but if he be out of the Pulpit, he is but as another man.

Theol. You speak contemptuously of Gods messengers, and of Gods sacred ordinance. But the Apostle doth fully answer your objection, saying, *Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God: and how can they hear without a Preacher?* (Rom. 10. 17.) In which words the Apostle tells you flatly, that you can never have faith nor serve God aright without Preaching.

Antil.

Antil. When you have preached all that you can, you can make the word of God no better than it is; and some put in and put out what they list. The Scriptures are but mens inventions, and they made the Scriptures.

Theol. VVe preach not to make the VWord better, but to make you better. As for putting in and putting out, it is a meer untruth. And whereas you say, The Scriptures were made by men, it is blasphemy once to think so; and you are worthy to receive your answer at Tiburn.

Antil. Now I see you are hot. I perceive for all your god-linejs, you will be angry.

Theol. I take it to be no sin be to angry against sin. For your sin is very great, and who can bear it?

Antil. All this while you speak much for preaching, but you say nothing for prayer. I think there is as much need of prayer, as preaching. For I find in the Scriptures, Pray continually; but I find not, Preach continually.

Theol. No man denieth but that Prayer is most needful, alwayes to be joyned unto Preaching, and all other holy exercises: for it is the hand-maid to all. But yet we prefer Preaching above it, because Preaching is both the director and whet-stone of Prayer; yea it steereth us aright in all spiritual actions and services whatsoever without the which we can keep no certain course, but are ever ready to erre on this hand or that. Now whereas you say you find, Pray continually, but not Preach continually, you might (if you were not wilfully blind) find also, Preach continually: (2 Tim. 4. 2.) for the Apostle saith, Be instant, preach the Word in season and out of season, that is, alwayes, as time and occasion shall serve.

April. You extol preaching; but you say nothing for reading. I belive you condemn reading.

Theol. Doth he that highly commendeth gold, condemn silver? I do ingenuously confess, that both publick and private reading of the Scriptures, is very necessary and profitable, and would to God it were more used than it is; for it is of singular use, both to increase knowledge and judgement, and also to make us more fit to hear the VWord preached. For such men

as are altogether ignorant of the History of the Bible can hear the Word with small comfort.

Phil. It seems that this man neither regards the one nor the other : because, for ought that I can see, he cares not greatly if the Scriptures were burnt.

Antil. Oh, Sirrah, you speak very malèpertly ; you may speak when you are bidden. Who made you a judge ? You are one of his Disciples, and that maketh you to speak of his side.

Phil. No Sir, I hope I am Christ's Disciple, and no man's. But assuredly I cannot hold my peace at your vile cavilling, and most blasphemous Speeches.

Antil. I cry your mercy, Sir, you seem to be one of these Scripture-men : you are one of the Spirit : you are so full of it, that it runneth out at your nostrils.

Phil. You do plainly shew your self to be a scoffing Ismaelite.

Antil. And you do plainly shew your self to be one of the folk of God which know their seats in Heaven.

Phil. I pray God be merciful unto you, and give you a better heart : for I see you are in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.

Antil. You think there is none good but such as your self, and such as can please your humour. You will, forsooth be all pure. But by God there be a company of pure knaves of you.

Theol. Now you do manifestly shew of what spirit you are. For you both swear and rail with one breath.

Antil. God forgive me. Why did he anger me then ? There be a company of such controllers as be in the world, that no-body can be quiet for them.

Theol. I perceivè a little thing will anger you, sith you be angry with him for speaking the truth.

Antil. What hath he to do with me ? He is more busie than needs. Why doth he say I am in a bad case ? I will not come to him to learn my duty. If I have faults, he shall not answer for them. I shall answer for mine own faults, and every fat shall stand on his own bottom. Let him meddle with that he hath to do withal.

Theol.

Theol. You are too impatient : you take matters at the worst. We ought friendly, and in love, to admonish one another : for we must have a care one of anothers salvation. I dare say for him, that he speaks both out of love and compassion toward you.

Antil. I care not for such love. Let him keep it to himself. What doth he think of me ? doth he suppose that I have not a soul to save as well as he ? or that I have no care of my salvation ? I would he should know, that I have as great care of my salvation as he, though I make not such outward shews : for all is not gold that glisters ; I have as good a meaning as he, though I cannot utter it.

Theol. These words might well be spared ; I hope you will be pacified, and amend your life, and draw near to God hereafter.

Antil. Truly, Sir, you may think of me what you please ; but I assure you, I have more care that way, than all the world wonders at, I thank God for it, I say my prayers every night when I am in my bed ; and if good prayers will do us no good, God help us. I have alwaies served God duly and truly, and had him in my mind, I do as I would be done to. I keep my Church, and tend my prayers while I am there ; and I hope I am not so bad as this fellow would make me. I am sure if I be bad, I am not the worst in the world, there be as bad as I. If I go to Hell, I shall have fellows, and make as good shift as others.

Theol. You think you have spoken wisely, but I like not your answer. For your words sinell strongly both of ignorance, pride and unbelief. For first, you justifie your self in your faithless and ignorant worship of God. And secondly, you justifie your self by comparison with others, because others are as bad as you, and you are not the worst in the world.

Antil. Now I know you speak of ill-will : for you never had a good opinion of me.

Theol. I would I could have as good an opinion of you as I do desire, and that I might see that wrought in you, which might draw my love and liking towards you. And as for ill will, the Lord knoweth I bear you

you none. I desire your conversion and salvation with my whole heart, and I would think my self happy if I might save your soul with the loss of my right arm.

Antil. I hope I may repent. For the Scripture saith, At what time soever a sinner doth repent, God will have mercy on him. Therefore if I may have space and grace, and time to repent before death, and ask God forgiveness, and say my prayers, and cry God mercy, I hope I shall do well enough.

Theol. You speak as though repentance were in your power, and at your commandment; and that you can put it into your own hearts when you list; ask that makes you, and many others presume of it three hours before death. But you must know, that repentance is the rare gift of GOD, and it is given but to a few. For God will know him well, that he bestoweth repentance upon; sith it is proper only to the Elect. It is no worldly matter. It is not attained without many and frequent prayers, and much hearing, reading, and meditating of the word of God. It is not so easie a matter to come by as the world judgeth; it is not found but of them that seek it diligently, and beg it earnestly. It is no ordinary three hours matter. Cry God mercy a little for fashion; will not do it. Cursory saying of a few prayers a little before death, availeth not. For though true Repentance be never too late, yet late repentance is seldom true. Herein delayes are dangerous: for the longer we defer it, the worse is our case. The farther a nail is driven in with a hammer, the harder it is to get out again. The longer a Disease is let run, the harder it is to cure. The deeper a tree is rooted, the harder it is to pluck up again. The longer we defer the time of our repentance, the harder it will be to repent. And therefore it is dangerous driving it off to the last cast. For an ancient Father saith, [Augustine] We read but of one that repented at the last, that no man should presume; and yet of one, that none might despair.

Well

Well then, to conclude this point ; I would have you to know that the present time is always the time of Repentance : For time past cannot be recovered, and time to come is uncertain.

Antil. Sir, in my opinion you have uttered some very dangerous things, and such as were enough to drive a man to despair.

Theol. What be they, I pray you ?

Antil. There be divers things. But one thing doth most of all stick in my stomach, and that is the small number that shall be saved, as you say. But I can hardly be persuaded that God made so many thousands to cast them away when he had done. Do you think that God hath made us to condemn us ? Will you make him to be the Author of condemnation.

Theol. Nothing less. For God is not the cause of mens condemnation, but themselves. For every man's destruction cometh of himself : as it is written, (Hos. 13.9.) O Israel thy destruction is of thy self, As for God he doth (in great mercy use all possible means to save souls, as he saith by the Prophet, (Esa. 5.4.) What could I have done more to my Vineyard that I have not done unto it ? But to come near to your question : I deny that God hath created the most part of men only and solely unto perdition, as the proper end which he did aim at in creating them, but he hath created all things for the praise of his glory : as it is written, He hath created all things for himself, and the wicked also for the evil day, (Prov. 16. 4.) then it followeth, that the cause, and end why the wicked were created, neither was nor is the only destruction of his creature, but his own praise and glory ; that that only might appear and shine forth in all his works. Yet certain it is, that God for just causes (albeit unknown and hid to us) hath rejected a great part of men : The causes, I say, of reprobation are hid in the eternal counsel of God and known to his godly wisdom only. They are secret, and hid from us, reserved in his eternal wisdom to be revealed at the glorious appearing of our Lord Jesus. (Rom. 11. 33.)

His

His judgments (saith the Scripture) are as a great deep, and his waies past finding out. It is as possible for us to comprehend the Ocean in a little dish, as to comprehend the reason of God's counsel in this behalf. (Psal. 36.6.)

Antil. What reason, justice, or equity is there that sentence of death should be passed upon men before they be born, and before they have done good or evil.

Theol. I told you before, that we can never comprehend the reason of God's proceeding in this behalf, ye must know, that his will is the rule of righteousness, and must be unto us instead of a thousand reasons. For whatsoever God willeth, in as much as he willeth it, it is to be holden just, we cannot conceive the reason of many natural things, and things subject to sense, as the motion of the celestial bodies; their unconceivable swiftness, their matter and substance, their magnitude, altitude and latitude. We cannot thoroughly find out the causes of the thunder, lightnings, winds, earth-quakes, ebbings and flowings of the Sea, and many other things under the Sun, how then can we possibly ascend up into the Privy Chamber and Council-house of God, to sift and search out the bottom of God's secrets, which no wit or reach of man can any way attain unto? Let us therefore learn in GOD'S fear to reverence that which we cannot in this life comprehend. This one thing I must say unto you, that whatsoever God decreeth, yet doth he execute no man till he hath ten thousand times deserved it. For betwixt the decree and the execution thereof, cometh sin in us: and most just causes of condemnation.

Antil. If God had decreed mens destruction, what can they do withal? Who can resist his will? why then is he angry with us? For all things must needs come to pass according to his decree and determination.

Theol. First, I answer you with the Apostle. (Rom. 9. 20.) O man, who art thou that pleadest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the Potter power over the

the clay, to make of the same lump, one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour? Moreover I answer, that God's decree doth not enforce the will of man, which worketh and moveth of it self. It hath in it self the beginning of evil motion, and sinneth willingly. Therefore though the decree of God imposeth a necessity upon all secondary causes; (so as they must needs be framed and disposed according to the same) yet no co-action or constraint; for they are all carryed with their voluntary motion. Even as we see the plumb of a clock, being the first mover, doth cause all the other wheelles to move, but not to move this way or that way; for in that they move some one way, and some another it is of themselves: I mean of their own frame: so God's decree doth move all secondary causes, but takes not away their own proper motion. For God is the Author of every action, but not of any evil in any action. As the Soul of man is the original cause of all motion in man, as the Philosophers dispute, but yet not of lame and impotent motion, for that is from another cause, to wit, some defect in the body. So, I say, Gods decree is the root and first cause of motion, but not of defective motion, that is from our selves. Likewise, that a bell soundeth, the cause is in him that ringeth it; but that it jarreth, the cause is in it self. Again, that an Instrument soundeth, is in him that playeth upon it; but that it jarreth, is in it self; that is, in its own want of tuning. So then to shut-up this point; All Instruments and middle causes are so moved of God, being the first mover, that he always doth well, holily, and justly in his moving. But the Instruments moved are carryed in contrary motions, according to their own nature and frame: If they be good, they are carryed to that which is good: but if they be evil, they are carryed unto evil. So that according to the double beginning of motion and will, there is a double and divers work and effect.

Antil. But from whence comes it that man of himself, that is, of his own free motion, doth will that which is evil?

Theol. From the fall of Adam, whereby his will was corrupted.

Antil. What was the cause of Adams fall?

Theol. The Devil, and the depravation of his own will. will

Antil. How could his will incline unto evil, it being made good, and he being made good?

Theol. He and his will were made good, yet mutably good. For to be immutably good, is proper onely to God. And Adam did so stand, that he might fall; as the event declared.

Antil. Was not the decree of God the cause of Adams fall?

Theol. No: but the voluntary inclination of his will unto evil. For Adam's will was neither forced, nor by any violence of Gods purpose, compelled to consent; but he of a free will and ready mind left God, and joyned with the Devil.

Thus then I do determine, That Adam sinned necessarily, if you respect the decree or event: but if you respect the first mover and inherent cause, which was his own will, then he sinned voluntarily and contingently. For the decree of God did not take away his will, or the contingency thereof, but onely order and dispose it. Therefore (as a learned Writer saith) *Volens peccavit, & proprio motu*; [Beza] *He sinned willingly and of his own motion.*

And therefore no evil is to be attributed unto God or his decree.

Antil. How then do you conceive and consider of the purpose of God in all these things?

Theol. Thus: that God decreed with himself, and *uno actu*, at once, That there should be a world: That Adam should be created perfect: That he should fall of himself: That all should fall with him: That he would save some of the lost race, That he would do it of mercy through his Son: That he would condemn others for sin.

Antil.

Antil. How do you prove the decree of reprobation ; to wit, that God hath determined the destruction of thousands before the world was ?

Theol. The Scripture calleth the Reprobates, *The vessels of wrath prepared to destruction ; Rom. 9. 22.* The Scripture saith, *God hath not appointed us unto wrath : 1 Thes. 5. 9.* Therefore it followeth that some are appointed unto wrath. The Scripture saith of the Reprobates, *that they were even ordained to stumble at the Word, (1 Pet. 2. 8.)* The Scripture saith, *They were of old ordained to this condemnation, Jude 4.*

Antil. But how answer you this ? *God wills not the death of a sinner ; therefore he hath predestinated none to destruction, Ezek. 18. 32.*

Theol. God wills not the death of a sinner simply and absolutely, as it is the destruction of his creature ; but as it is a means to declare his justice, and to set forth his glory.

Antil. *God did fore-see and fore-know that the wicked would perish through their own sin : but yet he did not predestinate them unto it.*

Theol. Gods pre-science and fore-knowledge cannot be separated from his decree. For whatsoever God hath fore-seen and fore-known in his eternal counsel, he hath determined the same shall come to pass. For as it appertains to his wisdom to fore-know and fore-see all things : so doth it appertain to his power to moderate and rule all things according to his will.

Antil. *What do you call prescience in God ?*

Theol. Prescience in God is that whereby all things abide present before his eyes : so that to his eternal knowledge ; nothing is past, nothing to come ; but all things are alwaies present : and they are so present, that they are not as conceived imaginations, forms and motions ; but all things are alwaies so present before God, that he doth behold them in their verity and perfection.

Antil. *How can God justly determine of mens destruction, before they have sinned ?*

Theol. This objection hath been answered in part before

before : for I told you, that God condemneth none but for sin, either original only, or else, both original and actual. For howsoever he doth in himself, before all time, determine the reprobation of many, yet he proceeds to no execution till there be found in us both just deserts, and apparent cause. Therefore they deal unsoundly and foolishly, which confound the decree of reprobation with damnation it self; sith sin is the cause of the one, and onely the will of God of the other.

Phil. Well, sir, sith we are so far proceeded in this question by the occasion of this mans objections and cavils, I pray you now, as you have spoken much of Reprobation, and the causes thereof; so let us hear somewhat of Election, and the causes thereof; and shew us out of the Scriptures, that God hath before all worlds chosen some to eternal life.

Theol. Touching the decree of Election, there are almost none that make any doubt thereof: therefore small proof shall serve for this point. Onely I will confirm it by one or two testimonies out of Holy Scripture. First, the Apostle saith, (*Eph. 1. 3, 4.*) *Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual Blessings, in Heavenly things in CHRIST, as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love.* You see the words are very plain and pregnant for this purpose. Another confirmation was taken out of the eighth Chapter to the Romans, in these words: *Those whom he knew before did he also predestinate to be like to the image of his own Son, that he might be the first-born of many brethren.*

Phil. Which be the causes of Election:

Theol. The causes of Election are to be found onely in God himself. For his eternal Election dependeth neither upon man, neither yet upon any thing that is in man, but is purposed in himself, and established in Christ, in whom we are Elected. This is fully proved in these words: (*Eph. 1. 5, 6.*) *Who hath predestinated us to be adopted, through Jesus Christ in himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glory, wherewith he hath made us freely accepted in his beloved.*

V Where

Where we see the Apostle telleth us, that his free grace, and the good pleasure of his will, are the first motives or moving cause of our Election.

Phil. But the Papists fetch the first motive of Election out of mans merits, and foreseen works. For, say they, God did fore-see who would repent, believe, and do well; and therefore he made choice of them.

Theol. But they are greatly deceived: For I say again and again, that there is nothing in us which did ever move God to set his love upon us, and to chuse us unto life: (*Deut. 7.7.*) but he ever found the original cause in himself: as it is written, *He will have mercy, upon whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.* And again, *It is neither in him that willeth, nor in him that runneth: but in God that sheweth mercy.* The Lord himself also testifieth, that he did choose his people not for any respect in them, but only because he loved them, and bare a special favour unto them. So then it is a certain truth, that Gods eternal predestination, excludeth all merits of man, and all power of his will, thereby to attain unto eternal life: and that his free mercy, and undeserved favor is both the beginning, the midst, and the end of our salvation: that is to say, All is of him, and nothing of our selves.

Phil. Whether then doth faith depend upon Election, or Election upon faith? That is, whether did God choose us, because we do believe? or whether do we believe, because we are chosen?

Theol. Out of all doubt, both faith and all the fruits of faith do depend upon Election, For therefore we believe, because we are Elected; and not therefore Elected, because we believe, As it is written (*Act. 13. 48.*) *So many as were ordained to everlasting life, believed?*

Antil. If men be predestinated before they be born, to what purpose serve all precepts, admonitions, laws, &c. It forced not how we live. For neither our godly or ungodly life can alter the purpose of God.

Theol. This is a very wicked and carnal objection; and sheweth a vile and dissolute mind in them that use it.

it. But I could wish such men to consider the end of Election, which is that we should lead a godly life: as it is plainly set down in the first chapter to the *Ephesians*, ver. 4 where the Apostle saith, *God hath chosen us before the foundation of the world.* But to what end? that we should live as we list? No, no, saith he; *But that we should be holy and unblamable before him.* Again he saith, (*Rom. 8. 29.*) *We are predestinated to made like the image of his Son, that is, to be holy and righteous.* For most certain it is, that we can judge nothing of predestination, but by the consequences; that is, by our calling, justification, and sanctification. For when once we feel the work of grace within us, that is, that we are washed by the new birth, and renewed by the Holy Ghost, finding in our selves an unfeigned hatred of sin, and love of righteousness) then are we sure, and out of all doubt, that we are predestinated to life. And it is even as much as if GOD had personally appeared unto us, and whispered us in the ear, and told us that our names are taken, and written in the Book of Life. For *whom he hath predestinated them he hath called: and whom he hath called, them he hath justified; and whom he hath justified, them he hath glorified, Rom. 8. 30.* Now therefore till we feel these marks of Election wrought in us, we can be at no certainty in this point; neither are we to take any notice of it, or to meddle in it: but we must strive, according to that power and faculty we have, to live honestly and civilly, waiting when GOD will have mercy on us, and give us the true touch. As for them that are careless and dissolute, setting all at six and seven, there is small hope that they are elected, or ever shall be called.

Antil. I think the preaching and publishing of this doctrine of predestination, hath done much hurt: and it had been good it had never been known to the people, but utterly concealed. For some it driveth to despair, and others it maketh more secure and careless.

Theol. You are in a great error: for this doctrine is part of God's revealed truth, which he would have known.

known to his people : And in good sooth, it is of very great and comfortable use to the children of God against all the assaults of the Devil, and temptations of desperation whatsoever. For when a man hath once in truth felt by effects, that God hath chosen him to life, then though the Devil lye sore at him, and the conscience of sin and his own frailties do vehemently assault him; yet he knoweth certainly that the eternal purpose and counsel of God is immutable, and that because his salvation is not grounded upon himself, or his own strength, but upon the unchangeable decree of God, which is a foundation immoveable, and alwaies standing sure and firm: therefore do the Devil and sin what they can, yet he shall be upheld in righteousness and truth, and even (as it were) born up in the arms of God even to the end. For whom God loveth, to the end he loveth them. Moreover, when once the Lord's people perceive (by their sanctification and new birth) both that the Lord hath rejected and reprobated so many thousand thousands, and made choice of them to be Heirs of his most glorious Kingdom, being in themselves of the same mould and making that others are, and that he hath done all this of his free grace and undeserved mercy towards them : Oh how doth it ravish their hearts with the love of him! Again, how frankly and chearfully do they serve him ! how willingly and faithfully do they obey him ! Yea, how are they wholly wrapt and inflamed with the desire of him ! For it is the perswasion and feeling of God's love toward us, that draweth up our love to him again : as *S. John* saith, (*1 Joh. 4.*) *We love him, because he hath loved us first.*

Moreover, it is said of *Mary Magdalen*, (*Luk. 7. 47.*) that she loved much, because much was forgiven, for after she felt her many and great sins freely pardoned, her affections were kindled with the love and obedience of Christ. So likewise the Church in the *Canticles*, (*Cant. 2. 5.*) after she had been in the banquetting house of all spiritual grace, and felt the

the banner of Christ's love displayed upon her, forthwith she was wrapt therewith, and cryed out (as it were in a swoond) that she was sick of love. So again, (*Cant. 5.4.*) when Christ put in his hand by the hole of the door (that is, touched the very inward parts of her heart by his spirit) then her heart yerned, and her bowels were affectioned towards him. This is it which *St. Paul* prayed for upon his knees, that it may be granted to the *Ephesians*, (*Eph. 3. 18, 19.*) that they may be able to comprehend with all the Saints, what is the breadth and length, height, and depth of God's love toward us, and to know the love of Christ, (which passeth knowledge) and to be filled with all fulness of God. Thus then you see the great and comfortable use of this doctrine of election, both in that it ministreth strength and comfort against all temptations, as also because it constraineth us to love G O D , and of very love to fear him, and obey him.

Phil. Well, Sir, I think now you have spent time enough in answering the objections and cavils of Antilegon. In all which I do observe one thing, that there is no end of cavilling and objecting against the truth: and that a man may object more in an hour, than a learned man can well answer in a day.

Theol. You say truth. And the reason hereof is, because men have sin in them out of measure, and the Spirit of God but in measure. Therefore they can by the one, object and conceive more against the truth, than by the other they shall be able to answer and say for it.

Phil. It appeareth indeed, that errors be infinite, and objections innumerable, and that there is no end of mens cavilling against God's sacred truth. It is good for us therefore to be throwly settled in the truth, that we be not intangled, or snared with any cavils, or sophistications whatsoever. And I do verily think (notwithstanding all his objections and exceptions) that he doth in his conscience desire, with Balaam, to dye the death of the Righteous, and to be as one of them whom he seemeth to despise.

Theol.

Theol. I am so perswaded too. For this is the triumph that vertue hath over vice, that where she is most hated, there she is often desired and wished for. And this is the great punishment that God bringeth upon the wicked: *Virtutem ut videant intabescantque relinqua*, as saith the Poet: *That they shall see vertue, and pine away, having no power to follow it.*

Phil. But now let us return to the point we were in hand with, before we fell into these *Objections* and cavils: which was, concerning the small number that shall be saved: and as you have shewed us many reasons thereof, so proceed to speak yet more unto that point.

Theol. As I have shewed you of sundry lets, both within us and without us, which do keep us back from God, and hold us fast in our sins: so now, unto all that hath been said before, I will add nine great hinderances unto eternal life, which may not unfitly be termed nine bars out of Heaven, and nine gates into Hell.

Phil. Which be they?

Theol. They be these.

Infidelity, Presumption of God's mercy: Examples of the multitude: Long custom of sin: Long escaping of punishment, Hope of long life: conceitedness: Ill Company: Evil examples of Ministers.

Phil. These indeed be strong bars out of Heaven, and wide gates into Hell. I pray you therefore prove them out of the Scriptures, and lay them forth somewhat more largely.

Theol. The first which is infidelity, is proved out of the Fourth chapter to the *Hebrews* verse 2. where it is written, *Unto us was the Gospel preached, as unto them: but the word which they heard, profued them not, because it was not mixed with faith in those that heard it. And again, They could not enter in, because of unbelief. (Heb. 3. 19.)* Here we see that unbelief did bar out the old people from entering into the Land of Promise, which was a figure of God's eternal Kingdom. And sure it is, that the same unbelief doth bar out thousands of us. For many will believe nothing but their own fantasies.

fantasies. They will not believe the Word of God : especially when it is contrary to their lusts and likings, profits and pleasure. Though things be manifestly proved to their faces, and both the chapter and the verse shewed them, yet will they not believe; or though they say they believe, yet will they never go about the practise of any thing, but reply against God in all their actions. And for the most part, when God saith one thing, they will say another : when God saith Yea, they will say Nay, and so give God the lye. Some again will say, *If all be true that the Preachers say, then God help us.* Thus you see how infidelity doth bar men out of Heaven, and cast them into Hell

Phil. *Let us hear of the second gate, which is, Presumption of Gods mercy.*

Theol. This is set down in the 29 chapter of Deuteronomy, where the Lord saith thus : *When a man heareth the words of this curse, and yet flattereth himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, although I walk according to the stubbornness of mine own heart, thus adding drunkenness to thirst, (that is, one sin to another) the Lord will not be merciful unto him, but the wrath of the Lord, and his jealousy, shall smite against that man, and every curse that is written in this book, shall light upon him, and the Lord shall put out his name from under Heaven.*

Here we see how the mighty God doth thunder down upon such as go on in their sins, presuming of his mercy, saying in their hearts, *If I may have but a Lord have mercy upon me three hours before death, I care not.* But it is just with God when these three hours come, to shut them up in blindness, and hardness of heart, as a just plague for their presumption. Therefore the prophet David, seeing the grievousness of this sin, prayeth to be delivered from it : *Keep me O Lord (saith he) (Psal. 19. 13.) from presumptuous sins, let them not reign over me. Let all men therefore take heed of presumptuous sins : for* though

though God be full of mercy, yet he shall shew no mercy to them that presume on his mercy, But they shall once know, to their cost, that justice goeth from him as well as mercy.

Phil. Let us come to the third gate, which is the Example of the multitude.

Theol. This is proved in the 23 of *Exodus* ver. 2. where the Lord saith flatly, *Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil.* In another place, the Lord saith, *After the doing of the Land of Egypt, wherein ye dwell, shall ye not do; and after the manner of the Land of Canaan, whither I will bring you, shall ye not do, neither walk in their ordinances.* (*Lev.* 18. 3.)

Against this Law did the children of *Israel* offend, when they said in the stubbornness of their heart to the Prophet *Jeremy*, *The word that thou hast spoken unto us in the Name of the Lord, we will not hear, but we will do whatsoever goeth out of our mouth, and we will do as we have done, both we and our Fathers, our Kings and our Princes in the Cities of Judah, and the streets of Jerusalem,* *Jer.* 44. 16.

Note here, how they do altogether refuse the Word of the Lord, and how they follow the example of the multitude. We see in these our days by lamentable experience, how thousands are violently carried down the stream; and for defence of it, some will say, *Do as the most men do, and the fewest will speak ill of you:* which is a very wicked speech. For if we will follow the course of the most, we shall have the reward of the most, which is eternal perdition. Let us therefore take heed of bending with the sway: for the sway of the world doth weigh down all things that can be spoken out of the Word of God, and openeth a very wide passage into Hell.

Phil. Proceed to the fourth gate into Hell, which is, the long custom of sin.

Theol. This is noted by the Prophet *Jeremy* to be a very dangerous thing. For he saith, (*Jer.* 13. 23.) *Can the Black-moor change his skin, or the Leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, which are accustomed to*

do evil. Noting thereby, that it is as hard a matter to leave an old custom of sin, as to wash a Black-moor white, or to change the spots of a Leopard, which because they are natural, is most impossible. So when men through custom have made swearing, lying, adultery, and drunkenness, (as it were) natural to them, oh how hard it is to leave them! For custom maketh another nature, and taketh away all sence and feeling of sin.

Phil. *Let us hear of the fifth gate, which is the long escaping of punishment.*

Theol. This is avouched by the wise man, in these words: *Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the hearts of the Children of men are set in them to do evil.* (Eccl. 8. 11.) Where he sheweth, that one cause why men are so hardned in their sins, is, because God winketh at them, and letteth them alone, not punishing them immediately after they have sinned, For if God should forthwith strike down one, and rain fire and brimstone upon another, and cause the Earth to swallow up a third, then men would fear indeed. But it hath been shewed before, that God taketh not this course, but though he meet with some in this life, yet he lets thousands escape, and that makes them more bold, thinking they shall never come to their answer; even as an old thief, which hath a long time escaped both Prison and Gallows, thinks he shall alwaies so escape, and therefore goeth boldly on in his thefts. But let men take heed: For as the Proverb saith, *Though the pitcher goeth long to the Well, yet at last it cometh broken home:* So though men escape long, yet they shall not escape alwaies, for there will come a day of reckoning, a day that will pay it home for all. Thus you see how impunity leadeth numbers to destruction: that is, when men are let alone and neither smitten by the hand of God, nor punished by the Law of the Magistrate.

Phil. *Let us come to the sixth gate, which is the slip of long life.*

Theol. This is affirmed by our Saviour concerning that rich man, who when he felt the world come in upon him, with full stream, said he would pull down his barns and build greater; and say to his Soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, live at ease, eat, drink, and take thy pastime. (Luk. 12.19.) But our Saviour calls him fool, for flattering himself in security, and promising unto himself long life. Moreover, he told him that the same night he should make a hellish and miserable end. Note, I pray you, how Jesus Christ, the fountain of all wisdom, calleth this man a fool, and yeildeth a reason thereof; to wit, because he gathered riches to himself, and was not rich in God: he had great care of this life, and none at all for that which is to come. So then it followeth that all such are right fools indeed, and may be chrionicked for fools, (how wise soever they be taken and reputed in the world) which have much care for their bodies, and none for their souls; great care for this life, and little for that which is to come. Well, let all such prophane VVorldlings as dream and dote of long life, (and therefore defer the day of their repentance and conversion unto God) take heed by this mans example, that they reckon not without their host, and be suddenly snatch'd away in the midst of all their pleasures and jolities; as *Job* saith, (*Job* 21. 23, 24.) *Some die in their full strength, being in all ease and prosperity. Their breasts run full of milke, and their bones run full of marrow.* VVe see therefore how dangerous a thing it is for men to flatter and sooth up themselves with hope of long life.

Phil. Proceed to the seventh Gate, which is, conceitedness.

Theol. This is indeed a very broad gate into Hell. For the Scripture saith, (*Prov.* 26. 16.) *Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of such an one.* And again, *The fool is wiser in his own eyes, than seven men that can give a sensible reason,* (*Prov.* 26. 16.) The Holy Ghost we see affirmeth, That such

as are puffed up with an overweening of their own gifts are farthest of all other from the Kingdom of heaven. For they despise the wisdom of God to their own destruction. They hold scorn to be taught: they will say they know as much as all the Preachers can tell them. For what can all the Preachers say more than this? We are all sinners, we must be saved by Christ, we must do as we would be done to. There is no more but to do well, and have well, &c. Alas poor souls! they look aloft, they are desperately hoven up with conceitedness, not knowing that they are poor, naked, blind, and miserable, *Rev. 3.17.*

These men trust altogether to their own wit, learning, policy, riches, and great reputation in the world. And because all men crouch to them, and clap their hands at them, therefore they swell like Turkey-Cocks, set up their feathers, and draw their wings upon the ground with a kind of snuff and disdain of all men, as if they were the onely wights of the world. Moreover, when men do praise them for their natural gifts, sooth them and applaud them, then it is a wonder to see how they streak themselves, as though they would forthwith take their flight, and mount unto the clouds. But let all insolent and conceited men hearken unto the wo that is pronounced against them by the eternal King of Glory, saying, *Wo unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight, Isa. 5.21.* Again, let them hearken to the counsel of God, which faith, *Trust unto the Lord with all thine heart, but lean not unto thine own wisdom. Be not wise in thine own eyes, but fear God and depart from evil, (Prov. 3.5.)* These silly conceited fools think, that because they have the cast of this life, and can cunningly compass the things of this World, and go through-stitch with them, therefore they can compass Heaven also by their fine wits, and deep devices: alas, but poor wretches, they are greatly and grossly deceived. For the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God, and he catcheth the wise in their own craftiness.

And

And again the Lord saith, (1 Cor. 3. 19.) *I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will cast away the understanding of the prudent.* Let not these men therefore stand too much in their own light, let them not trust to their own policies: for they are all but as an Ice of one nights freezing, which, will deceive them that trust unto it. Let them therefore become fools in themselves, that God may make them wise. Let them deny themselves, that God may acknowledge them. Let them be humbled in themselves, that God may exalt them. For assuredly there is no use after this life, for the most exquisite wisdom of the flesh, it endeth all when we end, (Eccles. 2. 16.) *For how dyeth the wise man? Even as dyeth the fool,* saith the Holy Ghost. And where all worldly wisdom endeth, there all heavenly wisdom beginneth. Thus therefore we see what a wide gate into hell Conceitedness is, and how many enter in therat.

Phil. *Now let us understand of the eight gate into hell, which is Ill company.*

Theol. The Spirit of God fore-seeing the great dangers of this, and knowing how ready we are to be carryed away with ill company, doth give us most earnest warning to take heed of it as a most dangerous thing, (Prov. 4. 14, 15.) *Enter not (saith he) in the way of the wicked, and walk not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, go not by it, turn from it, and pass by.* The reason hereof is yielded in another place, where it is said, *A companion of fools shall be made worse,* (Prov. 13. 20.) Let men therefore take heed of ill company: for many thereby have been brought to the Gallows, and have confessed upon the Ladder, that ill company hath brought them unto it, and therefore have admonished all by their example to take heed and beware of lewd company.

Moreover, the Scripture saith. *He that followeth vain companions, shall be filled with poverty,* Prov. 28. 19. And again in the same chapter, *He that keepeth company with banqueters, shameth his father.* Let us therefore say with David, *I am a companion of all them that*

fear God, and keep his Commandments, (Psal. 119.63.) And on the contrary, let us say with him, *I have not haunted with vain persons, neither kept company with dissemblers. I hate the assembly of the evil, and have not accompanied with the wicked, (Psal. 26. 4, 5.)* Let us therefore by Davids example shun the company of the wicked : for as a man is, so is his company. It is the surest note to discern a man by. For as all unlike things are unsociable, so all things are sociable. Herein let us beware we deceive not our selves with vain words, and an opinion of our strength, as if we were as strong as Christ, and could not be drawn away with any company. No, no : we are more apt to be drawn than to draw ; to be drawn to evil by others, than to draw others to good ? therefore God saith by his Prophet, *Let them return unto thee, but return not thou unto them, (Jer. 15. 19.)* Undoubtedly he is an odd man that is not made worse with ill company. For can a man touch pitch and not be defiled therewith ? Can a man carry coals in his bosom, and not be burnt ? Daily and lamentable experience sheweth, that many of them which think themselves strong, are this way most grievously smutted. Let a man think therefore he never abandoneth evil, till he abandon ill company. For no good is concluded in this Parliament. For ill company is the suburbs of Hell.

Furthermore, it is to be observed, that some upon admonitions, and some inward compunctions of their own conscience, do leave their sins until they have new provocations, and until they come among their old copes-mates and sinful companions, and then are they carryed back agian to their old byas, and return to their folly, as a dog returneth to his vomit. For we see some, which otherwise are of good natures and dispositions, most pitifully and violently carryed away with ill company. For even as green wood of it self is unapt to burn, yet being laid on the fire, with a great deal of seare wood, it burneth as fast as the rest : *(Prov. 26. 21.)* So many toward youths, which of themselves are not so prone unto evil as others, yet with

this violent stream and blustering tempest of ill company are carryed away.

Phil. *Let us come to the last gate, which is, the Evil examples of Ministers.*

Theol. It grieveth me, and I am almost ashamed to speak of this point: for is it not a woful and lamentable thing that any such should be found amongst the sons of Levi? Is it not a curse, that the Ministers of Christ should be of a scandalous conversation? For if the eye be dark, how great is the darkness? If they be examples of all evil to the flock, which should be patterns, lights and examples of all goodness, must it not needs strengthen the hands of the wicked, so as they cannot return from their wickedness? But this is an old disease and evil sickness, which hath always been in the Church. The Prophet *Jeremy* doth most grievously complain of it in his time, and saith, *That from the Prophets of Jerusalem is wickedness gone forth into all the Land. For both the Prophet and the Priest do wickedly. (Jer. 23. 14.) I have seen (saith he) in the Prophets of Jerusalem, filthiness. They commit adultery, and walk in lies: they strengthen also the hands of the wicked, that none can return from his wickedness: they are all unto me as Sodom, and the Inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah: And in the ninth verse of the same chapter he sheweth, that it was no pleasure or joy unto him so publickly to reprove them; but that he did it with exceeding grief, as being forced thereunto, both in regard of God's glory, and the good of the Church. His words are these: Mine heart breaketh within me, because of the Prophets, and all my bones shake. Moreover, in the same Chapter is set down how the Lord would feed them with wormwood, and make them drink the water of gall, and sundry other wayes plague them for their flatteries, seducements, corrupted doctrine, and evil example of life.*

Phil. *Most certain iris, that the evil example of Ministers, and especially of Preachers, is very dangerous and offensive; for thereby thousands are hardened in their sins. For men will say, Such a Minister, and such a Preacher doth*

thus and thus, and therefore why may not we do so too? They are learned, and know the Word of God, therefore if it were evil, I hope they would not do it: for they should be lights unto us, and give us good examples. Therefore sith they do such things, we cannot tell what to think, or what to say to the matter: They bring such simple folks as we are into a mammering.

Theol. Oh that I could with the Prophet *Jeremy*, quake and shake to think of these matters! Oh that I could mourn as a Dove in penning of it! Oh that I had in the wilderness a cottage, and could with *Job* be a brother to the Dragons, and a companion to the Ostridges, whilst I have any thoughts of these things! Oh that I could weep and mourn without sin, before I yield you an answer! For weep indeed I may, but answer I cannot. Alas (with much grief I speak it) all is too true that you say, and herein the people have advantage against us, if I may call it advantage. But let this be my answer: If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch. (*Mat. 15. 14.*) Blind guides and blind people shall perish together. If because we are wicked, they will be more wicked, then both they and we shall burn in Hell-fire together. Then let them reckon their gains, and see what they have got. They have small cause to triumph over us, for thereby their Market is never a whit amended. Let them take this for answer. And let us, that are the Ministers of Christ, and Preachers of the Gospel, look narrowly to our selves, and make streight steps to our feet: for if we tread never so little awry, we may see how many eyes are upon us. Let us therefore with *David* pray continually, Order my goings, O Lord, that my foot-steps slip not: for when my foot slipped, they rejoyced against me. And as for the people, let them follow the examples of those which walk unblameably, (as God be thanked some such there be) and let them flee the examples of such as are offensive. So shall God have more glory, and they more peace in their own hearts. Thus have we heard what a wide gape

is opened into Hell, By the evil examples of Ministers, and especially of preachers.

Phil. Well, sith there be so many bars out of Heaven, and so many gates into Hell, it is a very hard matter to break thorow all these bars, and to enter into life, and as hard a matter to miss all these gates, and to escape Hell. He quits him well that can do it.

Theol. True indeed. And as hard a thing as that is, so hard a thing is it for flesh and blood to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. And yet most men make light of it, and think it is the easiest matter of an hundred.

Asun. As hard as it is, yet I hope by the grace of God, I shall be one of them that shall enter in. For so long as I do as I would be done to, and say no body no harm, nor do no body no harm: God will have mercy on my soul. And I doubt not but my good deeds shall weigh against my evil deeds, and that I shall make even with God at my latter end. For I thank God for it, I have alwaies lived in his fear, and served him with a true intent: Therefore I know that so long as I keep his commandments, and live as my neighbours do, and as a Christian man ought to do, he will not damn my soul.

Theol. Can you then keep God's Commandments?

Asun. As near as God will give me grace.

Theol. Nay, but I ask you whether you keep them or no.

Asun. I do assay to keep them as near as I can: I do my true intent. Though I keep them not all, yet I am sure I keep some of them.

Theol. Because you say you keep some of them, I pray you let me be so bold with you, as to examine you in the particulars. You know the first Commandment is this, Thou shalt have none other Gods in my sight. How say you, do you keep this?

Asun. I am out of all fear of it. For I never worshipped any God but one. I am fully perswaded there is but one God.

Theol. VVhat say you then to the second Commandment? Thou shalt not make to thy self any graven Image, &c.

Asun. I never worshipped any Images in my life, I despise them, I know they cannot help me, for they be but stocks and stones.

Theol. What say you to the third Commandment? which is this, Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, &c.

Asun. Nay certainly, I was never counted a sweaver in my life, but I have served God alwayes from a child, and have had a good faith in him, ever since I could remember, I would be sorry else.

Theol. VVhat say you than to the fourth Commandment? Remembre that thou keep holy the Sabbath day, &c.

Asun. Nay for that matter I keep my Church as well as any man in the Parish where I dwell, and mind my prayers as well when I am there. I thank God for it (though I say it my self) I have been always well given and have loved God's Word with all my heart; and it doth me good to hear the Epistles and Gospels read every Sunday by our Vicar.

Theol. Tell me what you say to the fifth Commandment? which is, Honour thy Father, and thy Mother, &c. Do you keep this?

Asun. I have alwaies loved and obeyed my father and mother from my heart. I hope there is no body can accuse me for that: and I am sure if I keep any Commandment, it is this. For when I was a boy, every body said that I was well given, and a toward child. Therefore if I should not keep this Commandment, it wold be a great grief unto me, and go as near my heart, as any thing that came to me this seven years.

Theol. VVhat say you to the sixth Commandment? Thou shalt not kill.

Asun. It were strange if I should not keep that.

Theol. VVhat say you to the seventh? Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Asun. I thank God for it, I was never given to women. God hath alwaies kept me from that; and I hope, will so still.

Theol. VVhat say you to the eighth? Thou shalt not steal.

Asun.

Asun. I am neither Whoremaster, nor Theif.

Theol. What say you to the ninth? Thou shalt not bear false witness, &c. *See Ps.*

Asun. I defie all witness bearing from my heart.

Theol. What say you to the last? Thou shalt not covet.

Asun. I thank God for it, I never coveted any man's goods but mine own.

Theol. Now I perceive you are a wonderful man: you can keep all the Commandments. You are like the blind Ruler which said unto Christ, *All these things have I kept from my youth. (Mat. 19. 20.)* I perceive now indeed, that it is no marvel though you make so light of Preaching: for you have no need of it. You are whole, you need not the Physitian: you feel no misery, and therefore you care not for mercy. For where misery is not felt, there mercy is not regarded: but I see you need no Saviour.

Asun. You say not well in that, I need a Saviour; and it is my Lord Jesus that must save me, for he made me.

Theol. What need you a Saviour, sith you are no sinner?

Asun. Yes, believe me, I am a sinner, we are all sinners: there is no man but he sinneth.

Theol. How can you be a sinner, sith you keep all the Commandments?

Asun. Yes, I am a sinner for all that.

Theol. Can you both be a sinner and be without sin too? for he that keepeth the Commandments, is without sin; which thing you say you do. But I see how the case standeth, that a great number of such ignorant and sottish men as you are, will in general say you are sinners, because your consciences tell you so; but when it cometh to particulars, you know not how you sin, nor wherein. I pray you therefore let me lead you thorow the Commandments again, and deal with you in particulars, that I may bring you to the sight of your sins. How say you therefore, Do you upon your knees, every Morning and Evening give

give GOD thanks for his particular Mercies, and manifold Favours towards you; and do you call much upon him privately, and much also with your family? Answer me plainly and simply.

Asun. I cannot say so.

Theol. Then you have broken the first commandment, which chargeth us to give God his due worship whereof prayer and thanksgiving are apart. So then, here at the very entrance, you are found guilty. Further, I demand of you whether you never had any by-thoughts in your prayers, and your heart hath not been upon other matters, even then while you were in prayers?

Asun. I cannot deny that: For it is a very hard matter to pray Without by thoughts.

Theol. Then (by your own confession) you have broken the second Commandment, which doth command the right manner of Gods worship: that is, that as we must worship God, so we must do it in faith, love, zeal, and pure affections. So that here you are guilty also? because when you pray, your mind is of other matters, and you do it not in sincerity and truth. Further, I demand of you whether you did never swear by your faith and troth, or by our Lady S. Mary and such other oathes?

Asun. Yes, by St. Mary have I; I must needs confess it.

Theol. We need no further witness, your very answer proveth it; for your answer is an oath: therefore here also are you guilty, because you swear by Idols. For I demand of you, whether you did never travel to Fairs on the Sabbath day, or make bargains on that day, or take journeys, or talk of worldly matters, neglecting holy duties.

Asun. Yes, God forgive me, I have.

Theol. Then are you guilty of the breach of the fourth Commandment, which chargeth us on pain of death to spend the Sabbath day in holy and religious duties, both publickly and privately. Further, I demand whether you instruct your wife, children and

servants

servants in the true knowledge of God, and pray with them or no?

Asun. I am sure you would have me speak the truth. I must needs confess, I do not, neither am I able to do it.

Theol. Then are you guilty of the breach of the fifth Commandment, which commandeth all duties of superiours, toward their inferiours, and of inferiours towards their superiours, whereof prayers and instructions are a part. Moreover, I demand whether you were ever angry or no?

Asun. Yes, an hundred times in my daies, and I think there is no body but will be angry at one time or other, especially when they have cause.

Theol. Then you have broken the sixth Commandment, which chargeth us to avoid wrath, anger, malice, desire of revenge, and all such like fore-runners unto murder. Furthermore, I ask you, whether you did never look upon a woman with a lust in your heart?

Asun. Yes, for I think there is no man free from thoughts that way. I had thought, thoughts had been free.

Theol. No: thoughts are not free before God; for God knoweth our thoughts, and will punish us, arraign us, and condemn us for thoughts. Men know not thoughts, and therefore can make no Laws against thoughts; but because God is privy to all our most secret thoughts, therefore he hath made Laws against them, and will condemn them. Therefore I conclude, that if you have nourished adulterous thoughts in your heart, you are guilty of the breach of the seventh Commandment, which forbiddeth all secret thoughts and provocations whatsoever to adultery. But Further, I demand whether you did never pilfer, purloin, and steal some small things from your neighbour: as pasture poultry, conies, apples, and such like?

Asun. I cannot clear my self in these things, for I had thought they had been no sin.

Theol. Then have you broken the eighth Commandment, and stand guilty of eternal death. For God in this Commandment chargeth us to have as great a care of

of our neighbours goods, as of our own; and not to injure him any manner of way, in thought, word or deed. Therefore all deceit, pilfering, oppressing, and all unjust dealing with our neighbours goods, is here condemned. Moreover; let me ask you, Whether you did never lye or dissemble?

Asun. Yes, assuredly.

Theol. Then have you broken the ninth Commandment: when God chargeth us, both in witness bearing, and all other matters, to speak the plain truth from our heart: without lying or dissembling.

Last of all, I demand, whether you did never in your heart desire something that was not your own: as your neighbours house, or ground, kine or sheep: &c. therein bewraying the discontentment of your heart.

Asun. I am as guilty in this, as in any thing. For, God forgive me, I have often desired and lusted after this and that which was none of mine own, and so have bewrayed my discontentment.

Theol. Then I perceive (by your own confession) that you are guilty of the breach of all the Commandments,

Asun. I must needs confess it for I see now more into that matter than ever I did. I never heard so much before in my life, nor was ever asked any such questions as you ask me: I had thought many of those things which you asked me, had been no sins at all.

Theol. I could have convicted you in a thousand other particulars, wherein you daily and hourly break the Law of God. But my purpose was onely to give you a taste of some particular transgressions; and therewithal some little light by the way into the meaning of the Law: that thereby you might be brought to some better sight of your self, and might a little perceive in what case you stand before God; and by that little, conceive a great deal more.

Asun. Well: now I do plainly see, that I have been deceived, and am not in so good an estate before God: as I thought

thought I had been. Moreover, I see that thousands are out of the way, which think they are in a good case before God: whereas indeed they are in blindness; and in their sins. But Lord have mercy upon us! I do now plainly see that I am far from keeping the Commandments; and I think no man doth keep them.

Theol. You may swear it, I warrant you. For neither Saint Paul, David, or the Virgin Mary could ever keep any one of the Commandments. I am glad you begin to see into the Law of God, and to have some taste that way. For as a man's knowledge and in-sight is into the Law, so is his knowledge and in-sight into himself. He that hath a deep in-sight into the Law of God, hath also a deep in-sight into himself. He that hath no in-sight into the Law, can have no in-sight into himself. For the Law is that glass, wherein we do behold the face of our souls before God. The Apostle saith, *By the Law cometh the knowledge of sin.* Therefore those who are altogether ignorant of the Law, and never behold themselves in this glass, do commit an hundred sins a day, which they know not of, and therefore are not grieved for them. For how can a man be grieved for that which he knoweth not? But now farther, I pray you to give me leave to ask you some more questions of the principles of Religion: to the end, that you, knowing and feeling your ignorance, may be humbled therewith, bewail it in time, and seek after the true knowledge of God. But yet, by the way, I will ask *Antilegon* a question or two; because I desire to understand what knowledge he hath in the grounds of Religion. Tell me therefore, *Antilegon*, what was the reason that Christ was conceived by the Holy Ghost.

Antil. I could answer you, but I will not. What authority have you to examine me? Shew your Commission. When I see your warrant, I will answer you: in the mean time, you have nothing to do to examine me. Meddle with that you have to do withal.

Theol. I perceive you are not only ignorant, but wilful and obstinate, and refuse all instructions. Therefore I will leave you to God; and to your galled conscience. But I pray you, *Asunetus*, answer this question. What think you, what was the reason that Christ was conceived by the Holy Ghost?

Asun. Believe me, Sir, that is an hard question; you may ask a wise man that question: for I cannot answer it.

Theol. What say you then to this, Who was Christ's Mother?

Asun. Mary, Sir, that was our blessed Lady.

Theol. What was Pontius Pilate?

Asun. I am somewhat ignorant, I am not book-learned: but if you will have my simple opinion, I think it was the Devil. For none but the Devil would put our sweet Saviour to death.

Theol. What is the Holy Catholick Church which you do believe.

Asun. The communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins.

Theol. VVhat do you pray for, when you say, Thy Kingdom come.

Asun. I do pray that God would send us all of his grace, that we may serve him, and do as we ought to do, and keep us in a good mind to God-ward, and to have him much in our mind. For some (God blefs us) have nothing but the Devil in their mind; they do nothing a God's Name.

Theol. VVhat is the Sacrament?

Asun. The Lord's Supper.

Theol. How many Sacraments be there?

Asun. Two.

Theol. VVhich be they?

Asun. Bread and Wine.

Theol. VVhat is the principal end of your coming to receive the Sacrament.

Asun. To receive my Maker.

Theol. VVhat is the principal use of a Sacrament.

Asun.

Asun. The Body and Blood of Christ.

Theol. What profit and comfort have you by a Sacrament.

Asun. In token that Christ dyed for us.

Theol. I can but pity you for your ignorance : for it is exceeding gross and palpable. Your answers are to no purpose, and bewray a wonderful blindness and senselessness in matters of Religion. I am sorry that now I have no time and leisure to let you see your folly and extream ignorance ; as also to lay open unto you the sense and meaning of the Articles of the Faith, the Lords Prayer, and the Sacraments and all other the grounds of Christian Religion.

Asun. What course would you wish me to take, that I may come out of ignorance, and attain unto the true knowledge of God ?

Theol. Surely I would wish you to be diligent in hearing of Sermons, and reading the Scriptures, with Prayer and humility. Also that you would peruse Catechisms, and other good books, and especially *Virels* grounds of Religion, and the works of the two worthy servants of God, Master *Giffard*, and Master *Perkins*, and other men, that have done great service to the Church, and for whom thousands are bound to give God thanks. If you take this course, you shall by God's grace within a short time grow to some good measure of knowledge in all the main grounds of Christian Religion.

Phil. I had no thought any man had been so ignorant as now I perceive this man is.

Theol. Yes verily, there be thousands in this case. And I do know by experience, that many will use the very same answers, or at least, very little differing.

Phil. I warrant you if you had questioned with him of line or sheep, purchasing of Land, taking of Leases, or any other matters under the Sun, you should have found him very ripe and ready in his answers.

Theol. I am so perswaded too. For let a man talk with worldly men of worldly matters, and their answer

swer is never to seek. They will talk very freshly with you of such matters, if it be all the day long. For they have a deep in-sight into earthly things, and do wholly delight to talk of them, being never weary. For it is their joy, their meat and their drink. But come once to talk with them of God's matters, as of faith, repentance, regeneration, &c. You shall find them the veriest dullards and dances in the world. For when speech is had of these things, they are so befogged, that they cannot tell where they are, nor what they say.

Phil. *In my judgment, such mens case is very pitiful and dangerous: and so is this man's case also, if God do not very speedily pull him out of it.*

Theol. Questionless: For God saith, (*Hos. 4. 6.*) *My people perish for want of knowledge.* Our Lord Jesus saith, that ignorance is the cause of all errours. (*Mat. 22. 29.*) *Ye err, saith he, not knowing the Scriptures.* The Apostle saith, that ignorance doth alienate us from the life of God: For saith he, (*Eph. 4. 18.*) *The Gentiles were darkned in their cogitation, being strangers from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them.* So then it is clear that ignorance is not the mother of Devotion, as the Papists do avouch, but it is the mother of error, death and destruction, as the Scripture affirmeth. Our Lord fore-seeing the great danger of ignorance, (how thereby thousands are carryed head-long into Hell) doth admonish all men to search the Scriptures, which do testify of him, that so they might get out of the most dangerous gulf of ignorance, wherein multitudes are plunged. Commended therefore the Noble men of Berea are by the Holy Ghost, (*Act. 17. 11.*) because they received the word with all readiness; and searched the Scriptures dayly, whether those things were so. Oh therefore that men would earnestly seek after the knowledge of God in time; and (as the Prophet saith) *seek the Lord whilst he may be found; call upon him whilst he is near,* (*Esay. 55. 6.*)

Phil. I see that all ignorance in matters of faith, is dan-

dangerous ; but I think willful ignorance is of all other most dangerous.

Theol. VWillful ignorance (no doubt) is a plain prognostication and demonstrative argument of eternal death ; for it is a most horrible and fearful thing for men to refuse instruction, despise counsel, harden their hearts, stop their ears, and close up their eyes against God. This is the very upshot of our decay.

Phil. I pray you what call you hardness of heart ?

Theol. An hard heart is that which is neither moved with God's mercie, nor scared with his judgments ; neither feareth the Law, nor regardeth the Gospel ; neither is holpen by threatnings, nor softened by chastnings ; which is unthankful for God's benefits, and disobedient to his counsels ; made cruel by his rods, and dissolute by his favours ; unshamefaced to filthiness, and fearless to perils ; uncourteous to men, and wretchless to God ; forgetful of things past, negligent in things present, and improvident in things to come.

Phil. Lay forth yet more plainly the state of ignorant and hard hearted men, and shew how lamentable it is.

Theol. If a man be outwardly blind, we do pity him, and say, There goes a poor blind man, but if he be both blind and deaf, do we not more pity him, and say, Oh in how miserable a case is that man ? but if he be both blind, deaf, and dumb, do we not most of all pity him, and say, Oh, that man is in most wofull taking, and in a most pitiful plight ! How much more then are they to be pitied, which as concerning their souls, are both blind, deaf, and dumb, for the Diseases of their soul are far more dangerous, and more to be pityed than those of the body ?

VWould it not pity a man's heart to see a poor sheep in a Lyons mouth, whilst he teareth him, rendeth him, and pulls out his guts ? Even such is the case of ignorant men in the claws of the Devil. For the Devil hath them under him, rideth them at his pleasure, and teareth their souls in pieces.

Oh that we had eyes to see these things, hearts to feel them, and affections to be throughly moved with.

with them, even unto mourning and tears !

Phil. Few do think that ignorant men are in so woful a case as you speak of ; for they think ignorance will excuse them. And some will say, they are glad they have so little knowledge. For if they should have much knowledge of their Masters will, and do it not, they should be beaten with many stripes ; but now, being ignorant, they think all is safe.

Theol. God willed his people to offer sacrifice for their sins of ignorance, therefore ignorance is a sin, and excuseth no man. And as for the state of their souls before God, it is most miserable, if we could see into their souls as we see their bodies. For assuredly there be multitudes which ruffle it out in Velvets and Silks, and most brave and glittering out-sides, but inwardly are full of filthiness and sin : they have fine delicate bodies, but most ugly, black and filthy Souls : if a man could see into their Souls, as he doth into their bodies, he would stop his nose at the stink of them. For they smell rank of sin in the Nostrils of God, his Angels, and all good men.

Phil. Then I perceive by your speech, that the case of all ignorant and profanemen, is fearfull in the sight of GOD, and that all good men are to pity them, and to pray for them.

Theol. If two blind and deaf men should walk in a beaten path that leads to a great deep pond, wherein they are like to be drowned, if they go forwards, and two men far off should whoop unto them, and will them not to go forward lest they be drowned ; yet they neither seeing any man, nor hearing any man, go forward, and are drowned, were not this a lamentable spectacle to behold ? Even so is it with all the ignorant blind and deaf souls of the world, for they see no perils, but walk on boldly to destruction. And though the Preachers of the Gospel whoop never so loud unto them, or give them never so many warnings and caveats to take heed, yet they being inwardly blind, see nothing ; and spiritually deaf, hear nothing ; and therefore go on forward in their sins and ignorance, till they suddenly fall into hell pit.

Put case also two great Armies should pitch a field,

and

and fight a main battel upon a plain, and that some man should stand upon the top of a Mountain hard by, and behold all, and should see with his own eyes how thousands, and ten thousands went to wrack, and fell down on every side, as thick as hail, the whole plain swimming in blood: and should also hear the groaning of souldiers wounded, and the doleful sighs and groanings of many Captains and Collonels giving up the Ghost: were not this a most woful spectacle? Even so, when we do clearly see Satan wound and murder thousand thousand souls, is it not a far more tragical and lamentable fight; and ought it not even to kill our hearts to behold it? but (alas) men have no eyes to see in these things. And yet certain it is, that Satan doth continually, and in most fearful manner; massacre innumerable souls. Thus have I shewed you the woful estate of profane and ignorant men.

Phil. If it be so, you that be *Ministers and Preachers of the Gospel, and have taken upon you the cure and charge of souls, have need to look about you, and do what in you lieth to save souls; and, as good shepheards, in great pity, and compassion, to labour to pull them out of the paws of the roaring Lyon, which goes about continually, seeking whom he may devour.*

Theol. It standeth us upon indeed very seriously and carefully to look to it, as we will answer it at the dreadful day of Judgment: For it is no small matter that we have taken in hand, which is to take care for the flock which Christ hath bought with his blood. Would to God therefore that we would leave striving about other matters, and strive together all about this, who can pull most out of the kingdom of Satan, sin and ignorance; who can win most souls, and who can perform best service to the Church. This were a good strife indeed: and would to God that we might at last with joynd forces go about it, and with one heart and hand joyn together to build up Gods house. If through our own follies the work hath been hindred, or any breach made, let us in wisdom and love labour to make it up again: if there hath been any declining
and

and coldness, let us now at last revive, let us stir up our selves, that we may stir up others : let us be zealous and fervent in spirit, that we may through Gods grace put life into others : and rouze up this dead, declining and cold age wherein we live. So shall God be glorified, his church edified, his Saints comforted, his people saved, his throne erected, and the Kingdom of the Devil overthrown.

Phil. What think you were the best course to effect this which you speak of?

Theol. This is a thing that must be exceedingly laboured in of us which are the Ministers and Preachers of the Gospel. And here is required diligence, and (as we say) double diligence, for the People are every where very ignorant. Some are stones altogether incapable of instructions ; others are froward and willful ; some will receive the doctrine but not the practice ; some again are altogether set upon peevishness and cavilling. So that a man had better take upon him the charge of keeping VVolves and Bears, than the charge of souls. For it is the hardest thing in the world to reform mens disorders and to bring them into order ; to pull mens souls out of the Kingdom of Satan, and to bring them to God. It is as we say, an endless peice of work, and infinite toyl, a labour of all labours : I quake to think of it. For men are so obstinate and irrefragable, that they will be brought into no order, they will come under no yoke, They will not be ruled by God, nor bridled by his VVord. They will follow their own swinge. They will run after their own lusts and pleasures. They will rage and storm if you go about to curb them, and restrain them of their wills, likings and liberties. They will have their wills, likings and liberties. They will have their wills, and follow their old fashions, say what you will, and do what you can.

Is it not, think you, a busie piece of work to smoothe and square such timber logs, so full of knots and knobs ? Is it not a tedious and irksome thing to think upon ? And would it not kill a mans heart to go about

it? For how hard a thing is it to bring such into frame, as are so far out of frame?

Phil, Well, Sir, you can but do your endeavour, and commit the success to God. You can but plant and water: let God give increase. You are Ministers of the Letter; but not of the Spirit. You baptize with water; but not with the holy Ghost. If you therefore preach diligently, exhort, admonish, and reprove publickly and privately, studying all good example of life, and seeking with all good zeal, care and conscience, to do the uttermost that in you lyeth, to reduce them from their evil wayes; I take it, you are discharged, though they remain stubborn and incorrigible. For you know what the Lord saith by his Prophet, Ezek. 33. 9. If you do admonish them, and give them warning, then you shall be discharged, their blood shall be required at their own hands.

Theol. You have spoken the truth, and therefore, sith some must needs take upon them this so great a charge, it will be our best course, to labour much with them in Catechizing, and private Instructions, and that in most familiar and plain manner. For much good hath been done and is done this way. The ignorant sort must be much laboured upon this way: ~~any~~ so no doubt, much good may be done. For in all labour there is profit. (Pro. 14. 23.) Herein we (that are the Ministers of Christ) must be content to be abased, and to teach the poor ignorant people in most plain manner: asking them many easie questions, and often questioning with them in most plain and loving manner; till we have brought them to some taste and smack of the principles of Christian Religion. VVe must not be ashamed to use repetitions and tautologies, and to tell them one thing twenty times over, and over again, here a line, and there a line here a little, and there a little, precept upon precept, as the Prophet speaks. (Isa. 28. 10.) I know right well, nothing goes more against the stomach of a Scholar, and him that is learned indeed, than to do thus. It

is as irksome and tedious as to teach A, B, C. Some can at no hand endure it. But truly, truly, I find now, after a long experience, that if we will do any good to these simple and ignorant souls, we must enter into this course; and we may not be ashamed of it. For it will be our crown and our glory to win souls, howsoever we be abased. Let us therefore be well content to stoop down, that Christ may be exalted: let us be abased that God may be honoured; let us do all things in great love to Christ, who hath said, (*Joh. 21. 15.*) *If thou lovest me, feed, feed, feed my flock.* Let us therefore testify our love to him, by feeding his flock. Let us do all things in great love and deep compassion towards the poor souls that go astray; as it is said, that our Lord Jesus was moved to pity, and his bowels did yern to see the people as sheep without a shepherd: let it likewise move us thoroughly and make our hearts to bleed, to see so many poor sheep of Christ, wandring and straying in the Mountains and wildernesse of this world, caught in every bramble, and hanged in every bush, ready to be devoured of the VVolf.

Thus I have shewed you, what course (in my judgment) is best to be taken for the delivering of poor ignorant souls out of the captivity of Satan and sin.

Phil. Now as you have declared what course is best to be followed on your part which are Ministers and Preachers of the Gospel; so, I pray you, shew what is best to be done of us which are the people of God.

Theol. The best counsel that I can give you, if it were for my life is to be much exercised in the word of God, both in hearing, reading, and meditation thereof, and also to purchase unto your self, the sincere Ministry of the Gospel, and to make conscience to live under it, esteeming your self happy if you have it, though you want other things: and unhappy if you have it not, though you have all other things. For it is a peerless pearl an incomparable jewel, (*Mat. 13. 44.*) For the purchasing whereof, we are advised by our Lord

Jesus

Jesus to sell all that we have, rather than to go without it, again our Saviour Christ gives the same counsel to the Church of *Laodicea*, in these words: *I counsel thee to buy of me gold tryed by the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be cloathed, and that thy filthy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thy eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see, Apoc. 3. 18.* Where you see the Word of God is compared to most precious gold, whereby we are made spiritually rich; and to glittering attire, wherewith our naked souls are cloathed; and to an eye-salve, wherewith our spiritual blindness is cured, we are advertised also by Jesus Christ, whose counsel is ever the best, to buy these things whatsoever they cost us. The same counsel also giveth wise Solomon saying, *Buy the truth, but sell it not. Prov. 23. 23.* So then you see the counsel which herein I give you, is not of mine own but the counsel of Jesus himself, and Solomon the wise; and who can, or who dare except against their counsel?

Asun. Is your meaning that men must of necessity frequent preaching of the Word? will not bare reading serve the turn?

Theol. I told you before, that reading is good, profitable and necessary, but yet it is not sufficient. We must not content our selves with that only, but we must go further, and get unto our selves the sound preaching of the Gospel, as the chiefeft and most principle means which God hath ordained and sanctified for the saving of men. As Saint Paul saith, *When the world (by wisdom) knew not God, in the wisdom of God it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe, 1 Cor. 1. 21.* The meaning of which is, that when as men, neither by natural wisdom, nor the contemplation of the creatures, could sufficiently attain to the true knowledge of God; the Lord according to his heavenly and infinite wisdom, thought of another course, which is to save men by preaching, which the world counteth foolishness. And by the way, note that the preaching of the Word is not a thing of humane invention, but it is Gods own device.

vice, and came first from him, and is the next and nearest way to save mens souls.

Wise Solomon also in the Book of the Proverbs telleth us, that the preaching of Gods Word (which he calleth Vision, using the word of the Prophets, which called their Sermons Visions) is not a thing that may be spared, or that we may be at our choice, whether we have it or no: but he maketh it to be of absolute necessity unto eternal life. For he saith, *Where Vision faileth, the people are left naked.* Prov. 29. 18. So indeed it is in the Original: but the old Translation giveth us the sense thus: *Where the Word of God is not preached there the people perish.* Thus you see that Solomon strikes it dead, telling us that all they which are without preaching of the Word, are in exceeding great danger of losing their souls. O that men could be persuaded of this! St. Paul also saith, *That faith cometh by hearing the Word preached,* (Rom. 10. 14.) for he saith, *How can they hear without a Preacher?* If faith cometh by hearing the Word preached, than I reason thus, No preaching, no faith: no faith, no Christ: no Christ, no eternal life; for eternal life is onely in him. Let us then put them together thus: Take away the Word, take away faith, take away faith, take away Christ, take away Christ, and take away eternal life. So then it follows, Take away the Word and take away eternal life. Or we may read them backward, thus; if we will have Heaven, we must have Christ, if we will have Christ, we must have faith, if we will have faith, we must have the Word preached. Then it followeth thus: If we will have Heaven, we must have the Word preached. Then I conclude, that preaching generally, and for the most part, is of absolute necessity unto eternal life, as meat is of absolute necessity for the preservation of our bodies, as grasse and fodder are of absolute necessity for the upholding of the life of beasts, and water of absolute necessity for the life of fishes. Then this being so, men are with great care and conscience to hear the Gospel preached, to frequent Sermons, to resort much to God's house and habitation,

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where his honour dwelleth; with David to say, (Psal. 27. 4.) *One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I require, even that I may dwell in the house of the Lord, all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to visit his holy Temple.* With godly Mary to say, (Luk. 10. 42.) *One thing is necessary, and to chuse the better part.* With the poor Cripple at Bethesda, (John 5. 7.) to wait for the moving of the waters by the Angel, that his impotency may be cured: I mean, that we should tie our selves to the first moving of the spiritual waters of life, by the Preachers of the Gospel, that our spiritual impotency may be holpen and relieved. For the Ministry of the Gospel is that golden Pipe whereby, and where-through all the goodness of God, all the sweetness of Christ, and all Heavenly graces whatsoever, are derived unto us. Which thing was shadowed in the Law, by the pomegranates in the skirts of Aaron's garments, (Exo. 28. 33.) and the golden Bells between them round about; that is, a golden Bell and a Pomegranate, a golden Bell and a Pomegranate. The golden Bell did signifie the preaching of the Gospel, and the Pomegranates the sweet savour of Christ's death. Noting thereby, that the sweet savour of Christ's death, and all the benefits of his passion, should be spread abroad by the preaching of the Gospel. Thus you see, that if men ever purpose to be saved, they must make more account of the Preaching of the Gospel than they have done, and not think as most men do) that they may be without it, and yet do well enough: and some had as leewe be without it, as have it; for it doth but disquiet them, and trouble their consciences: but wo unto such.

Phil. *Yet we see where the Word is soundly preached, there be many bad people: and the reasons thereof, in mine opinion, are two: The one, that God taketh his Holy Spirit from many in hearing the Word, so that their hearing is made unfruitful: The other, that the Devil hath many devices to hinder the effectual working of the Word, so as it shall do no good at all, nor take any effect.*

fects in multitudes of men. But you, Master Theologus, can better lay open this matter than I, I pray you therefore speak something of it.

Theol. The sleights of Satan in this behalf, are more, and more ille, than I or any man else can possibly discover. For who is able to descry, or in sufficient manner to lay open the deep subtleties and most secret and sinful suggestions of the Devil in the hearts of men? He is so cunning a crafts-master this way, that none can perfectly trace him. His workings in the hearts of men are with such close and hideous deceits, and most methodical and crafty conveyances, that none can sufficiently find them out. But yet notwithstanding, I will bewray unto you so much as I know, or can conceive of his dealings with them that hear the word, that he may steal it out of their hearts, and make it fruitless and unprofitable. First of all he bestirreth him, and labours hard to keep all men fast asleep in their sins, that they may have no care at all of their own salvation, and therefore disswadeth them from hearing or reading the word at all, lest they should be awaked. If this will not prevail, but that they must needs hear, than his craft is to make their hearing unprofitable, by sleepiness, dulness, by-thoughts, conceitedness, and a thousand such like. If this will not serve the turn, but that the word doth get within them, and work upon them (so as thereby they grow to some knowledge and understanding of the truth) then he practiseth another way, which is to make them rest themselves upon their bare knowledge, and so become altogether conscienceless. If this will not suffice, but that men fall to doing, and leave some sins, especially the gross sins of the world, and do some good, then he perswadeth them to trust to those doings without Christ, and to think themselves well enough, because they do some good, and leave some evil. If this be not enough, but that men attain unto the true justifying faith, which apprehendeth Christ, and resteth upon his merits, then he deviseth how to blemish the beauty

ty of their faith, and weaken their comfort through many frailties and wants, yea, gross down-falls and rank evils; so as they shall be but spotted and leproous Christians. If this weapon will not work, but that Christians do joyn all good vertues with their faith, and abundantly shine forth in all the fruits of righteousness, then he casteth about another way, which is, to daunt and damp them with discouragements; as poverty, necessity, sickness, reproaches, contempt, persecutions, &c. If none of all these will do the deed, but that men constantly believe in Christ, and patiently and joyfully endure all afflictions, then his last refuge is to blow them up with gun-powder: that is to puff them up with a pride of their gifts, graces, and strength, and so to give them an utter overthrow whilst they do not walk humbly, and give God the praise of his gifts.

Thus have you a little taste of Satans cunning, in making the VVord unfruitful amongst us.

Alun. I pray you, good Sir, (seeing I am ignorant and unlearned) give me some particular directions out of the word of God, for the good guiding and ordering of my particular actions, in such sort as that I may glorifie God in the earth, and after this life be glorified of him for ever.

Theol. It were an infinite thing to enter into all particulars; but briefly do this: First, seek God earnestly in his word, pray much, in all things give thanks, shew evil, and do good; fear God, and keep his Commandments; reform your self and your household; love vertue, and vertuous men; keep company with the godly, and avoid the society of the wicked. Live soberly, justly, and holily in this present evil world. Speak always graciously, and beware of filthy communication. Recompence no man evil for evil, but recompence evil with good. Be courteous and pitiful towards all men. Take heed of swearing, cursing and banning. Beware of anger, wrath and bitterness. Traile your friend openly, reprove him secretly. Speak no evil of them that are absent, nor of the dead.

Speak evil of no man, speak alwaies the best, or at least not the worst. Reverence God's Name, and keep his Sabbaths. Avoid all the signs of condemnation, and labour after all the signs of salvation. Above all things take heed of sin, for that is the very cut throat of the Soul, and of all goodness. Tremble therefore and sin not; for if you sin, mark what followeth:

Six great dangers in Sin.

God seeth: His Angels bear witness: The Conscience pricketh: death threatneth: The Devil accuseth, Hell devoureth.

You see then that sin is no scare-crow or jesting matter. Every sin that a man committeth, is as a thorn thrust deep into the soul, which will not be got out again, but with many a sigh, and with many a sorrowful Oh, oh, every sin is written with a pen of Iron, (*Jer. 17. 1.*) and the point of a Diamond upon the conscience, and shall in the last day (when the Book shall be opened) accuse us and give in evidence against us. If a man commit sin with

Note this pleasure, the pleasure passeth away, but the conscience and sting of the sin abideth and tormenteth deadly; but if a man do well, though with labour and painfulness, the pain passeth away, yet the Conscience of well doing remaineth with much comfort. But the best end of sin is always repentance: if not in this life, then with wo and alas when it is to late. Therefore take heed in time; take heed, I say, of sin: for

Six most hurtful effects of sin.

Sin hardens the heart, *Heb. 3. 13.*

Sin gnaws the conscience, *1 Sam. 25.*

Sin fights against the soul, *1 Pet. 1. 11.*

Sin brings forth death, *Jam. 1. 15.*

Sin makes ashamed, *Rom. 6. 21.*

Sin procures plagues of body or soul. *Deut. 28.*

Behold therefore the evil effects of sin. For this cause Zophar the Naamathite speaks very wisely to Job, saying; (*Job. 11. 15, 16*) When thou shalt lift thy face out of thy sin, thou shalt be strong, and shalt not fear: thou shalt forget all sorrow, thou shalt remember it as the waters that are past. Where Zophar plainly sheweth, that the avoiding of sin is our strength, and the committing of it our weakning: according to that of Solomon, (*Pro. 10. 29.*) The way of the Lord is the strength of the upright man. Therefore walk in the way of GOD, and take heed of the ways of sin, for GOD punisheth every sin his way, some one way, and some another; and no sin can escape unpunished. For because God is just, therefore he must needs punish sin in all men, though in divers manners, as the wicked in their own persons, the godly in Christ. Beware of it therefore, and flatter not your self in your sins. Remember how every disobedience, and every transgression hath had a just recompence of reward. God hath in all ages matched the cause with the effect; that is, sin with the punishment of sin. The Israelites for breaking the first commandment, in making other Gods, were often smitten by the hand of God. Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Haron, for the breach of the second Commandment, in offering strange fire upon God's Altar, were consumed with fire. (*Lev. 10. 2.*) He that blasphemed and transgressed the Third Commandment was stoned to Death. (*Levit. 24. 14.*) He that brake the fourth Commandment, in gathering sticks on the Sabbath day, was likewise stoned. (*Numb. 15. 32.*) Absolom transgressing the fifth, was hanged in his own hair. (*2 Sam. 18. 9.*) Cain transgressing the sixth, in slaying his brother Abel, was branded with the mark of God's wrath. (*Gen. 4. 15.*) Sichein the Son of Hamor, transgressing the seventh, in defiling Dinah the Daughter of Jacob, was slain by Simeon and Levi the Sons of Jacob. (*Gen. 34. 26.*) Achan sinning against

Note how God in all ages hath punished the breakers of his law. *Exod. 32. 30.*

the eighth Commandment in stealing the wedge of gold, and the Babylonish Garment, was stoned to death. (*Jos. 7. 25*) *Ananias* and *Saphira* sinning against the ninth, in lying and dissembling, were suddenly smitten with death. (*Acts 5. 10.*) *Ahab* transgressing the tenth Commandment, in coveting and discontentment; was devoured of Dogs, (*1 Kings 21. 24.*) Or if you will have original sin therein only forbidden, then Infants are therefore punished with death, (*Rom. 5. 14.*)

Thus we see there is no dallying with GOD; but if we sin, we are as sure to be jerkt for it, as the coat is on our back. Therefore let us not deceive our selves, nor make light of sin, for sin is no scarbug, and we shall one day find it so. And howsoever we make light of some sins, yet in very deed all sin is odious in the sight of GOD; yea, all sin is hainous and capital in this respect, that it is against a person of infinite being, it is against GOD himself, it is against the highest Majesty. For the greatness of the person offended, doth inhaunce and increase the greatness of sin.

As for example: If a man rail at a Justice of peace he shall be stocked: If he rail at one of His Majesties privy Council, he shall be imprisoned: but if he rail at his own Majesty, he shall be hanged. So then you see how a sin is increased by the dignity of the person offended. Now then, sith all mortal Princes are but dust in the sight of God, (and he is a person of infinite and incomparable Majesty) how hainous and how flagitious a thing is it, in any wise, or after any sort to sin against His Most Royal and Sacred Person? Well then, to grow to some conclusion, this I do advise you; as to shun all vice, so to embrace all verue; as to put off the old man, so to put on the new man. Remember often and alwaies, what shall become of you after this life, whether you shall be forty year hence in Hell or Heaven. Look well to that in time, and therefore so live, that you may live alwaies. Consider often in your serious cogitation.

Nine profitable Considerations.

What you have been : what you are : what you shall be : what God hath done for you : what he doth : what he will do : Gods judgements past : Gods judgements present : Gods judgements to come.

Awake at last, and take care for your salvation; Sleep no longer in sin, lest ye perish eternally. *For verily there is a reward for the righteous : doubtless there is a God that judgeth the earth, (Psal. 58. 11.)* And this is the best counsel I can give you.

Asun. Your counsel is very good. I pray God give me grace to follow it, and so to live, that I may please God, and go to heaven in the end.

Tzol. You must take heed you speak not these words of course, and for fashion sake, having no settled purpose in your heart to follow these directions. For there be numbers that can skill to give good words, but they will do nothing. They think they highly please God with their good words, and that God will take them for payment, as though God regarded words. They would fain go to Heaven, but they will take no pains, they will leave no sins, they will not forgo their lusts and pleasures. They would have the reward of Gods Children, but they will not do the works of Gods Children. They would have the sweet, but they will none of the sour. They would have the crown, but they will fight never a stroke. They would fain come to Canaan but they are loath to travel that long and dangerous way which leadeth unto it. Therefore those men being the Sons of idleness, will step short (in the end) of that they look for. For the Spirit saith. *The sluggard lusts, but his soul hath nought; Prov. 13 4.* VVe must therefore leave bare words, and come to deeds. For our Lord Jesus saith, *(Mat. 7. 21.) Not every one that saith Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kinddom of heaven : but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven :* VWhere we see Christ (in plain terms) excludes out of his kingdom all those whose Religion consisteth onely in

good words, and smooth speeches; but make no conscience to practise the Commandments of God:

David, having made some good preparation for the building of the Temple, and perceiving his son *Solomon* to have stuff and provision enough to perfect and finish it, doth most wisely encourage him to the work in these words: *Up and be doing, and the Lord shall be with thee*, (1 Chron. 29.20.) Oh that men would follow this counsel of *David*, that they would up and be doing, and not sit still and do nothing; that they would leave words and countenances, and set upon the practise of Gods Law, and study with all care and conscience to be obedient to his will. Then assuredly God would be with them, and bless them, and much good would come of it. For the Scripture saith, (Prov. 14.23. *In all labour there is profit or increase: but the talk of the lips onely bringeth want.*

Phil. Most mens minds are so wholly drowned in the love of this world, that they have no heart to obey God, nor any delight in his Commandments.

Theol. The greatest part of men are like the *Gadarens*, which esteemed their swine more than Christ. As we see in these our dayes, how many make more account of their kine and sheep, than of the most glorious Gospel of Christ. They highly esteem dung, and contemn pearl. They are careful for trifles, and regard not the things of greatest moment; and therefore may fitly be compared to a man, who having his wife and children very sick, doth utterly neglect them, and is altogether careful for the curing of his hogs ears.

Phil. We are somewhat digressed from the matter we had in hand: I pray you therefore, if you have any more matter of good counsel to give to *Asinetus*, that you would presently deliver it.

Theol. I have little more to say, save onely I would advise him often to remember, and to muse on these things,

Nine things much to be thought on.

The evil he hath committed.

The good he hath omitted.

The time that he hath mis-spent.

The shortness of this life.

The vanity of this world.

The excellency of the world to come.

Death, than the which nothing is more terrible.

The day of Judgement, than the which nothing is more fearful.

Hell-fire, than the which nothing is more intolerable

Phil. *This is short and sweet indeed. You have touched some of these points before, in this our conference. But I am very desirous to hear somewhat more of the two last ; which yet have not been spoken of.*

Theol. Sith you are desirous, I will briefly deliver unto you that which I have received from the Lord. First concerning the day of judgment. I find in the volume of Gods Book, that it shall be very terrible and dreadful. For, *The Son of man shall come in the clouds of Heaven, with power and great glory, Mat. 24.30. St. Peter saith, (2 Pet. 3.10.) The day of the Lord shall come as a thief in the night, in the which the Heavens shall pass away with a noise, the elements shall melt with heat, and the earth, with the works that are therein shall be burnt up.* The Apostle telleth us, that at Christs coming the whole world shall be of a light fire, and that all Castles, Towers, goodly Buildings, Gold, Silver, Velvet, Silks, and all the glittering hue, glory and beauty of this world, shall be consumed to powder and ashes. For he saith plainly, *The heavens and the earth which are now, are reserved to fire against the day of judgment, and of the destruction of ungodly men, 2 Pet. 3. 7.* Moreover, he strongly proves, that as the world was once destroyed by water, so the second time, in the end thereof, it shall be destroyed with fire. The Apostle Saint Paul witnesseth the same things ;

things; for he saith, *Christ shall come from heaven, with all his mighty Angels in flaming fire, 2 Thes. 1: 7.* And in another place he notes the terrour of his coming to judgment, saying, *He shall come with a shout, with the voice of the Arch-Angel, and the Trump of God, 1 Thes. 4. 16.* VVe see by experience, that the coming of mortal Princes to any place, is with great pomp and glory. They have great trains and troops behind them and before them. They are accompanied with many Nobles: goodly Lords, and gallant Ladies do attend upon them. The Sword-bearers, Trumpeters, and Harbingers, go before: many flaunting and stately Personages follow after. Now then, if the coming of mortal Princes be so pompous and glorious; how much more glorious shall the coming of the Son of man be, in whose sight all mortal Princes are but dust? The Scriptures do affirm, that his second coming unto judgment shall be with such resplendent and unspeakable glory, that even the most excellent creatures shall blush at it. *For the Sun shall be darkened, and the Moon shall not give her light; and the Stars shall fall from Heaven, Mat. 24. 29.* Meaning thereby, that the most glorious and bright-shining Creatures shall be clouded and obscured by the unconceivable brightness of Christ's coming.

Moreover, the terrour of Christ's coming is noted unto us in this, that immediately before it, the very Sea shall quake and tremble, and in his kind cry out. For it is said, that *The Sea shall roar, (and make a noise in most doleful and lugubrious manner) and mens hearts shall fail them for fear, and for looking after those things which shall come on the world; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken, Luk. 21. 25.* O what shall become of Swearers, Drunkards, VVhoremongers and such like, in that day! They shall seek to creep into an auger hole to hide their heads. They shall then cry VVp and alas that ever they were born. They shall wish that they had never been born, or that their mothers had born them toads. And as it is in the Apoc

calypse,

eclipse, They shall say to the Mountains and Rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the presence of him that sitteth on the Throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. For the great day of his wrath is come, and who can stand?

WE see therefore, that the coming of Christ shall not be base and contemptible, as in his first visitation: but it shall be most terrible, princely, and glorious. And as the Scriptures do affirm, that his coming shall be with great terrour and dread; so also they do shew, that it shall be very sudden and unlooked for. For the day of the Lord shall come as a thief in the night; 2 Pet. 3. 10. as the travel that cometh upon a woman, 1 Thes. 5. 2. As a snare it shall come on all them that dwell on the face of the earth, Luk. 21. 35. That is, it shall suddenly catch and entangle all men, whatsoever they be in the world. As the earth-quake which was near ninety years ago, did suddenly take the world tardy, they not thinking of any such matter: So shall the coming of the Son of man to judgement take the world tardy and unprepared; for few there be that think of any such matter. Sith therefore the second appearing of Christ shall be with such suddenness, let us fear and tremble; for all sudden things are to be feared.

Phil. Well, Sir, as you have shewed the terrour and suddenness of Christs coming, so shew us the purpose and end of his coming.

Theol. The principle end of his coming, shall be to keep a general audit, to call all men to an account, to have a reckoning of every mans particular actions, and to reward them according to their deeds: as it is written, (Mat. 16. 27,) The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his Angels, and then he shall give to every man according to his deeds. Again, the Apostle saith to the Corinthians, We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every man may receive the things which are done in his body, according to that which he hath done, whether it be good or evil. 2 Cor. 5. 10.

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Here we do plainly see, that the end of Christ's coming shall be able to judge every man according to his works ; that is, as his works shall declare him, and testifie of him, and of his faith. In another place the Apostle saith, that the end of his coming shall be to render vengeance unto them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting perdition from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. (2 Thes. 1. 8, 9.) Wo then unto two sorts of men, the ignorant and the disobedient. For the Apostle saith flatly, they both shall be damned. Methinks both the ignorant and disobedient, and all other prophane men, should tremble to think of this, that Christ shall come to render vengeance unto them. If we did certainly know that a foreign enemy should invade our Nation, over-run it, and make a conquest of it, that he should slied our blood, destroy us, and make a massacre amongst us ; yea, that we should see our wives, our children, our kindred, and dear friends slain before our faces, so as their blood should stream in the streets ; what a wonderful fear and terrour would it strike into us ? we would quake to think of it. Shall we not then be much more afraid of the damnation of our Souls ? Shall we not quake to think that Christ shall come to take vengeance ? If the Lyon roar, all the beasts of the field tremble : and shall not we be afraid of the roaring of the Lyon of the Tribe of Judah ? But alas, we are so hard-hearted, and so rockt asleep in the cradle of security, that nothing can move us, nothing can awake us.

Phil. Now as you have shewed us the terrour and end of Christ's coming, so also declare the manner.

Theol. The manner of it is this, that the whole world shall be cited to appear personally, at the general Assizes, before the great judge. No man shall be admitted to appear by his Atturney, but all must appear personally, None shall be suffered to put in sureties ; but all must come in their own persons, without bayl, or main-prise ; as it is written, *We must*

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must all appear, high and low, rich and poor, King and Beggar, one and another; as it is plainly set down in the twentieth chapter of the Revelations, where the Spirit saith, *I saw the dead both great and small stand before God; and the Sea gave up the dead which were in her, and death and Hell delivered up the dead which were in them.* So then it is clear, that all, without exception, shall make their appearance at the great and dreadful Assizes. O what a great day will that be, when as the whole world shall appear together at once! If a King marry his Son, and bid other Kings, Emperours, Dukes and Nobles to the marriage, with all their pomp and train, we use to say, O what a Marriage, what a meeting, what ado, what a great day will there be? But when the universal world shall be assembled together, not only all Monarchs, Kings and Princes, but all other, that ever have been from the beginning of the world, all that are, and shall be, what a day will that be? No marvel therefore, though the Scriptures call it the day of God, and the great day of the Lord. Now then, when all flesh is come together, to make their personal appearance, then shall the Son of God ascend unto his Tribunal Seat, with great Majesty and Glory. For *A fiery stream shall issue, and come forth before him: a thousand thousand Angels shall accompany him, and minister unto him; and ten thousand thousand shall stand before him; the judgment shall be set; and the books opened.* All the Saints also, and true Worshippers of God shall attend him, and accompany him unto his judgement seat. And not only so, but they shall sit upon the Bench and Throne with him: as it is written, *1 Cor. 6. 2. The Saints shall judge the world: they shall judge the Angels:* That is, the Devil, the Angels of darkness. Our Lord Jesus himself did avouch the same thing, when he said to his Disciples, and in them to all true Christians, *Verily I say unto you, that when the Son of Man shall sit in the Throne of his Majesty, ye which followed me in the regeneration, shall sit upon twelve Thrones, and judge the twelve Tribes of Israel,* (Mat.

(*Mat. 19. 28.*) That is, the Saints of God shall bear witness that the judgment of Christ, and sentence of condemnation which he passeth against all unbelievers is according to justice and equity. Thus then we see how Christ shall be accompanied to his Throne, and with what glory and Majesty he shall ascend unto it. Experience teacheth, that when mortal Judges hold their Sessions and general Assizes, they are brought unto the Bench and Judgment seat with pomp and terrour. For the Sheriff of the Shire, and Halberdmen, with many Justices of Peace, and trains of others, do accompany them unto the Bench. Then with how much more Glory and Majesty shall the Son of God be brought unto his Royal Throne? Thus then, Christ being set upon his Judgement-seat, all the ungodly shall be convented before him, and he shall stand over them with a naked sword in his hand, the Devil shall stand by them on the one side to accuse them, and their own Consciences on the other side, and the gaping gulf of Hell underneath them, ready to devour them. Then shall the books be opened; not any books of paper and parchment, but the books of mens consciences: for every man's sins are written and recorded in his conscience, as it were in a Register book: Then will God bring every work to judgment, with every secret thought, and set them in order before all the Reprobates. Then *will God lighten the things that are hid in darkness, and make the counsels of the heart manifest.* (*1 Cor. 4. 5.*) Then shall all the ungodly be arraigned, convicted and hold up their hands at the Bar of Christ's Tribunal Seat, and shall cry, guilty. Then shall that most dreadful sentence of death and condemnation be pronounced against them by the most righteous Judge, *Go ye cursed into everlasting fire, which is prepared for the Devil and his Angels.* (*Mat. 25. 41.*) O doleful sentence! O heavy hearing! Whose heart doth not tremble at these things? Whose hair doth not stand upon their heads? For then shall thousands, which in this world have flourished as the Cedars of Lebanon, be cast down for ever.

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evermore, and shall drink (as a just recompence for their iniquity) of the bitter cup of God's eternal wrath and indignation, in the Kingdom of darkness, and in the fearful presence of Satan, and all the cursed enemies of God's grace.

Phil. Well, now as you have declared unto us the terror, the suddenness, the end, and the manner of Christ's coming to judgment; so lastly, shew us the right use of all these things.

*Theol. Saint Peter telleth and teacheth us the right use of all: for, saith he, Seeing all these things must be dissolved, what manner of persons ought we to be in Holy conversation and godliness? (2 Pet. 3. 11.) As if he should say, Sith the Heavens shall pass away with a noise, the elements shall melt with heat, and the earth with the works that are therein, shall be burnt up: sith also the coming of Christ shall be with great terror, to a fearful end, and in a fearful manner. O how ought we to excel in goodness? So then, Saint Peter telleth us, that the true use of all is this; that hereby we be brought nearer unto God, even to be more obedient to his will, and to walk in all his commandments, making conscience of all our ways, and studying to please God in all things, and to be fruitful in all good works, living soberly, justly, and holily in this present evil world, and shewing forth the vertues of him which hath called us out of darkness to this marvellous light: that so we may be prepared against the day of his appearing, that it may not take us tardy. For our life ought to be a continual meditation of death: we should alwaies live as if we should die, or that our bed should be our grave: we must live continually, as if Christ should come to judgment presently, as it is reported of a godly man in the Primitive Church, that whether he ate or drank, or whatsoever he did, he thought alwaies he heard the trumpet of the Lord, with these words, *Arise ye dead, and come to judgment.* Put case it were certainly known, that Christ would come to judgement, the next Midsummer day; O what an alteration would it make.*

make in the world ! how would men change their minds and affections ? Who would care for this world ? VVho would set his heart upon riches ? VVho would regard brave apparel, who durst deceive or oppress ? who durst be drunk, who durst swear, lye, and commit adultery ? Nay, would not all men give up themselves to the obedience of God ! would not all serve him diligently ; would not all men and women flock to Sermons ? would they not give up themselves to prayer and reading ? VVould they not repent them of their sins ? would they not cry for mercy and forgiveness ? see then what the knowledge of a certain day approaching would effect. And ought we not to do all these things with as great care and zeal seeing the day is uncertain ? For who knoweth whether Christ will come this moneth or the next, this year or the next ? He himself saith, *Be ye ready, watch, for in the hour that you think not of, will the Son of man come.* (Mat. 24. 44.) VVe think he will not come this year, nor next year, nor this hundred year. It may be therefore that he will come suddenly upon us, we know not how soon : For in an hour that we little think of, will he come. Therefore our Saviour saith in the thirteenth Chapter of *Mark*, verse 33. *Take heed, watch, and pray ; for you know not when the time is.* And in the Gospel of *St. Luke*, he saith, *Take heed that your hearts be not overcome with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and the cares of this life ; and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come upon all them that dwell upon the face of the earth* (Luke. 21. 34, 35.) VVe hear therefore how many watch-words and caveats our Saviour giveth us, when he saith, *Be in readiness, awake, take heed, watch and pray, and look about you, lest that day come suddenly upon you, and take you napping.* It standeth us all therefore upon, to be at an hours warning, upon pain of death, and as we will answer it at our uttermost peril.

Phil. Proceed to speak of the torments of Hell.

Theol. Concerning the torments of hell, I do note three.

three things, which I will briefly speak of, and they be these: The extremity, perpetuity, and remedilessness thereof. First, touching the extremity thereof, it standeth specially in these three things. First, that it is a separation from all Joy and comfort of the Presence of God. Secondly, that it is an eternal fellowship with the Devil and his Angels.

Thirdly, it is a feeling of the horrible wrath of God, which shall seize upon body and soul, and shall feed on them (as fire doth upon pitch and brimstone) for ever. The Scriptures doth note the extremity of it in calling it, *A lake that burns with fire and brimstone for ever*; (*Apoc. 21. 8.*) in saying, *There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth*; (*Luk. 13. 28.*) in affirming that *their worm dyeth not*, *Mat. 8. 12.* (meaning the worm that gnaweth their conscience, or the torment of conscience) and the fire never goeth out, in terming it, *Tophet, which is deep and large, and the burning thereof is fire and much wood: and that the breath of the Lord, as a river of brimstone, doth kindle it.* All these things be terrible to our senses, and yet can they not fully express the thing as it is indeed. For no heart can conceive, or tongue express, the greatness and extremity of the torments of Hell. As the joyes of Heaven never entred into the heart of man; no more did the torments of Hell. All the torments and troubles that fall upon men in this life, are but the sparkles of the furnace of Gods total wrath. All fires are but as it were pictures of fire, in comparison of Hell-fire. For as one writeth, Hell-fire is so extreemly hot; that it will burn up a man seven miles before he cometh at it. Yet the Reprobates being alwaies in it, shall never be consumed of it.

As a Salamander is alwaies in the fire, and never consumeth; so the wicked shall be alwayes in the fire of Hell, and never consume. For Hell is a death alwaies living, and an end alwayes beginning. It is a greivous thing to a man that is very sick, to lye along upon a feather-bed, how much more upon a hot grid-iron? but how most of all to burn alwayes in Hell fire, and never be consumed? Another extremity of it

con-

consisteth in this, that the torments of Hell are universal ; that is, in every member at once, head, eyes, tongue, teeth, throat, stomach, back, belly, heart, sides, &c. All punishments of this life are particular ; for some are pained in their head, some in their back, some in stomach, &c. yet some particular pains are such, that a man would not suffer to gain all the world. But for a man to be tormented in all parts at once, what sight more lamentable ? who could but take pity of a dog in the street in that case ?

Thus then we see, that the extremity of Hell torments is greater than can be conceived or uttered. For who can utter that which is incomprehensible ? We can go no further in comprehending that which is incomprehensible, than to know it to be incomprehensible.

Phil. *As you have shewed us the extremity of Hell-torments, so now proceed to the perpetuity.*

Theol. The Scriptures do set forth the perpetuity of Hell-torments, in saying, they are for ever. *The wicked shall be cast into the Lake that burneth with fire and brimstone for ever.* The fire never goeth out. When as many hundred thousand years are expired, as there be stones by the Sea-side, yet still there be so many more to come. For that which hath no end, can never come to an end. If all the Arithmeticians in the world were set a work, to do nothing but number all the dayes of their life, even the greatest numbers that they could possibly set down, and should in the end add all their numbers together, yet could they never come any thing near to that length of time wherein the wicked shall be tormented.

If the whole circumference of the Heavens were written about with figures of Arithmetick, from them East to the West ; and from the West to the East again ; yet could it not contain that infinite time, and innumerable years, wherein all unbelievers shall suffer eternal torture. For in things infinite, time hath no place. For time is the measure of those things which are subject to measure. Therefore because Hell torments are infinite, they cannot be measured by any time ;

time; neither can that which is infinite be diminished. For if you substract from that which is infinite, ten thousand thousand millions of millions, yet is it thereby nothing diminished, or made less.

Put case a man should once in an hundred thousand years take a spoonful of water out of the great Ocean Sea, how long would it be ere he had so emptied it? Yet shall a man sooner empty the Sea, by taking a spoonful once in a hundred thousand years, than the damned soul shall have any ease. Therefore a certain Writer saith, *If the damned soul might be tormented in Hell but a thousand years, and then have ease, there were some comfort in it: (for then there would be hope it would come to an end) but, saith he, this word Ever, killeth the heart.* O consider this, ye that forget God, O ye carnal Worldings, think on this in time. For if you will not now be moved in the hearing, you shall then be crushed in pieces in feeling.

What availeth it to live in all possible pleasures and carnal delights here for some sixty years, and then to suffer this eternal torment? *What shall it profit a man to win the whole world, and lose his soul?* They be more than mad, which will hazard their soul for a little profit, and a few stinking pleasures. But this is the manner of men; they will have the present sweet (come of it what will) though they pay never so dear for it, though they go to the highest price: though they lose their souls for it. Oh the unspeakable blindness and madness of the men of this world! The Devil hath put out their eyes, and therefore leadeth them whither he lists. For who cannot lead a blind men whither he lists? *Nabash the Ammonite would make no covenant with the Israelites, (1 Sam. 11.2.) but upon condition that he might put out all their right eyes.* So the Devil doth covenant with all the wicked, to put out both their eyes, that he may lead them directly into Hell.

Phil. Now, Sir, a word or two more of the remedilessness of Hell-fire.

Theol. The Scriptures do affirm, that as the torments

ments of Hell are extreame, so they are without all hope of remedy: as it is written, *A man can by no means redeem his brother; he cannot give his ransom unto God; so precious is the redemption of the soul, and the continuance for ever.* (Ps. 49. 7, 8.) To this purpose Abraham said to the rich man, being in Hell-torments, *Betwixt you and us there is a great gulph set, so that they which would go from hence to you, cannot; neither can they come from thence to us.* (Luk. 16. 26.) Our Lord Jesus also saith, *What shall a man give for the recompence of his soul?* (Mat. 16. 26.) Where our Saviour doth plainly affirm, that there is no ransom or recompence, though never so great, to be given for a damned soul. For the Soul being in Hell, can never be released, it is past remedy, no means whatsoever can do any good; no gold, no silver, no friends, no riches, no power, no policy, no flattery, no bribery, no reach, no fetch or device whatsoever, can prevail one jot: for a man being once in Hell, hath no remedy, he is in close prison; he is shut up under the hatches for ever; there is no getting out again; he must suffer perpetual imprisonment. He cannot bring a Writ of false imprisonment, because he is laid in by the most righteous and just Judge, who cannot possibly do any wrong, but he must lye by it. For being there once, he is there for ever. If all the Angels of Heaven should intreat for a damned soul; if Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob should make great suit; if all the Prophets, Apostles, and Martyrs should be continual solicitors to Christ for release; if the Father should make request for his son, or the Mother for the Daughter, yet can none of these be heard; they must all have the repulse. For the sentence of Christ cannot be reversed, his decree is unrepealable. The due consideration of all these things may make all hearts to quake, and all knees to tremble. In the troubles and afflictions of this life; though a man come in never so great danger, yet he may wind out again by one means or another, by money, or friendship, or rewards, or such like means: but in Hell-
fire,

fire, this it is that gripes and maketh the heart despair, that there is no remedy at all to be used. If we should ask of a damned soul, or an afflicted conscience, what they would give for the ease and redemption of their souls, they would answer, the whole world : howsoever secure worldlings and wicked Atheists (which see nothing, or feel nothing) make nothing of it.

Here, by the way, let us consider the greatness of the loss of man's soul ; which we shall the better perceive and see into, if we can aright value and prize the soul. If therefore it be demanded what is the price of the Soul, or what is it worth ? Our Lord Jesus answereth, that it is more worth than all the world. For, saith he, *What shall it profit a man to win all the world, and lose his soul !* (Mat. 26. 26.) Therefore the soul of the poorest beggar is more worth than all the world. Then I reason thus : If the soul be more worth than all the world, then the loss of it is greater than the loss of the whole world. For indeed it is a loss of all losses, an unrecoverable loss. If a man should have his house burnt over his head, and all that he hath consumed in one night, it were a great loss. If a Merchant-venturer should lose twenty thousand pounds in one venture, in one ship, or (as they say) in one bottom, it were a very great loss. If a King should lose his Crown and Kingdom, it were an exceeding great loss. But the loss of the soul is a thousand times more than all these, it is a matter of infinite importance. If a Tenant be cast out of the favour of his Land-lord, it is a matter of grief. If a Noble man's Secretary be cast out of favour with his Lord, so that he taketh a pritch against him, it is a matter of great sorrow. If a noble man himself be discountenanced, and cast out of all favour with his Prince, that was in great favour, it is a corsie, a heart-smart, and a matter of exceeding grievance. But to be eternally separated from God, to be shut out of his favour, and to be cast away from his presence, and the presence of his Angels, is a matter of infi-

infinite more dolour and torment. Mark then and behold what a thing it is for a man to lose his soul. Oh therefore that men would be wise in God's fear, that they would look out in time, and make provision for their souls. Now then, to close up this whole point: the sum of all that hath been said is this, That the torments of Hell are endless, easeless, and remediless.

Asun. The laying open of these doctrines of Hell-fire, and the judgment to come, makes me quake and tremble: I am much thereby perplexed, I feel great terror in my conscience, I am afraid I shall be damned.

Antil. Damned, man! what speak you of damning? I am ashamed to hear you say so. For it is well known that you are an honest man, a quiet liver, a good neighbour, and as good a towns-man as any in the Parish where you dwell, and you have been alwaies so reputed and taken. If you should be damned, I know not who shall be saved.

Asun. I regard not your flatteries. I believe God, I believe his Word; I believe those things which Master Theologus hath alledged out of the Holy Scriptures, pointing me both to the Chapter and the Verse: and whether it be more meet that I should believe the Scriptures, or your soothing, judge you. No, no; now I do clearly see, by the glass of God's Law, that my state is wretched and miserable. For I have lived in sin and ignorance all the days of my life, being utterly void of all Religion and true knowledge of God. I am not the man indeed that you and others take me for. For though outwardly I have lived honestly to the world-ward, yet inwardly I have not lived religiously to God-ward.

Antil. Tush, tush; now I see you are in a melancholy humour. If you will go home with me I can give you a speedy remedy; for I have many pleasant and meerry books, which if you should hear them read, would soon remedy you of this melancholy humour. I have the Court of Venus, the Palace of pleasure. Bevis of South-hampton, Ellen of Rummin, The merry jest of the Fryer and the Boy. The pleasant story of Ctem of the Clough, Adam Bell, and William of Cloudestly, The old tale of William, Richard

Umphry, The pretty conceit of John Splinter's Will and Testament; which all are excellent and fine books against heart-qualms, and to remove such impishness as I see you are now fallen into.

Asun. Your vain and frivolous Books of tales, jests, and lies, would more increase my grief, and strike the point of sorrow deeper into my heart.

Ancil. Nay, if you be of that mind, I have done with

Phil. I pray you, if a man may be so bold with you, came you by all these good Books? I should have said, much trash and rubbish.

Ancil. What mattereth it to you? what have you to do enquire? But, I pray you; Sir, what do you mean to them trash and rubbish?

Phil. Because they be no better. They be goodly geere, in stuff! They are good to kindle a fire, or to scour an Oven withal. And shall I tell you my opinion of them? I do thus think, that they are devised by the devil, seen and allowed by the Pope, printed in Hell, and up by Hobgoblin, and first published and dispersed in Rome, Italy, and Spain; and all to this end, that filthy men might be kept from the reading of the Scriptures. For even as a Lapwing with her busie cry draw men away from her nest, so the Popish generation, by these fabulous devices, draw men from the Scriptures.

Ancil. Ah, Sir, I see now a fools bolt is soon shot. There are more precise than wise, the Vicar of Saint Fools will be your ghostly Father. What tell you me of your opinion? I would you should well know, I neither regard nor your opinion. There be wiser men than you, who read, allow, and take pleasure in these Books.

Phil. Let him alone, good Philagathus, for you see he is, there is no end of his crossing and caviling. But he that is ignorant let him be ignorant, and that is filthy, let him be more filthy. Let us now hear your Speech to Asunetus, for I see he is heavy-minded, and troubled in his mind. How do you, Asunetus? how do you feel your self? Methinks you are hard of heart.

Asun. I am the better for you, Sir, I thank God I never knew what sin meant till this day. It hath pleased God now to give me some sight and feeling thereof. I am greatly distressed in my conscience to think what I have been. The remembrance of my former sins do strike an horn your into me. When I consider how ignorantly and profanely, and how far off from God I have lived all my life, it stings and gripes me to the heart. I do now see that which I never saw, feel that which I never felt. I do plainly see, that if I had dyed in that state wherein I have lived all my life, I should certainly have been condemned, and should have perished for ever in my sin and ignorance.

Theol. I am very glad that God hath opened your eyes, and given you the sight and feeling of your misery; which indeed is the very first step to Eternal Life. It is a great favour and special mercy of God towards you, that he hath so touched your heart, you can never be thankful enough for it. It is more than if you had a million of Gold given you. It is the only rare priviledge of God's Elect, to have the eyes of their Souls opened, that they may see into heavenly and spiritual things. As for the world, it is just with God to leave them in their blindness.

Asun. I do feel the burthen of my sins: I am greatly grieved for them. I am weary of them. I am sorry that ever I sinned against God, or that I should be such a wretch, as to incur his displeasure, and provoke his Majesty against me. But I pray you, good Master Theologian, sith you are a spiritual Physitian, and I am sick of sin, that you would minister unto me, out of God's Word, some spiritual physick and comfort.

Theol. Truly, I must needs think, that the promises of mercy, and forgiveness of sin made in the Gospel, do belong unto you, and that Jesus Christ is yours; that you are truly interested in him, and have a proper right unto him. For he came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. You do not feel your self to be a sinner; you are grieved for your sins; you are weary of them; therefore Jesus

Christ

Christ is for you, all the benefits of his passion belong to you. Again he saith, *The whole need not the Physitian but they that are sick, Mat. 9. 12.* But you do acknowledge your self to be sick of sin; therefore Jesus Christ will be your Physitian: he will swaddle you; he will lap you; he will bind up all your sores; he will heal all your wounds; he will anoint them with the oyl of his mercy; he will smite upon you, and shew you a joyful countenance; he will say unto you, your sins are forgiven.

In him you shall have rest and peace to your soul. Through him you shall have ease and comfort. For he takes pity of all such as mourn for their sins as you do. He biddeth you, and all that are in your case, to come unto him, and he will help you. *Come unto me (saith he) all you that are weary and heavy laden, and I will ease you. (Mat. 11. 28.)* You are one of them that are bidden to come, for you are weary of your sins: you feel the burthen of them. Christ is altogether for such as you are. He regardeth not the world, that is, the prophane and unregenerate men. He bids not them come; he prayeth not for them. *E pray not for the world (saith he) (Joh. 17. 9.)* They have no part nor interest in him. They have nothing to do with him, or with his merits and righteousness. He is only for the penitent sinner, and such as mourn for their sins. He is a Pillow of Down to all aching heads, and aching consciences. Be of good comfort therefore, fear nothing; for assuredly Christ and all his righteousness is yours. He will cloath you with it. He will never impute your sins unto you, or lay any of them to your charge; though they be so many, or so great, he will forget them, and forgive them, as he saith by the Prophet *Esay, Though your sin were as crimson, they shall be made as white as snow: though they were red like scarlet, they shall be as wool. (Isay. 1. 18.)* And again, he saith by the same Prophet, *I have put away thy transgressions as thick as Clouds, and thy sins as a mist. (Isa. 44. 22.)* By another Prophet he saith, *He will lay aside our iniquities, and cast all our*

sins unto the bottom of the Sea. (Mic. 7. 19.) Again he saith by the Prophet *Esay*, I, even I, am he that put away thine iniquities for my own sake, and will not remember thy sins. (Isa. 43. 25.) And yet more sweetly he speaks to us by the Prophet *Jeremy*, saying, Turn again unto me, and I will not let my wrath fall upon you, For I am merciful, and will not alway keep mine anger. (Jer. 3. 12.) And again by the Prophet *Hosea* he saith, I will not execute the fierceness of my wrath, I will not return to destroy Ephraim; for I am GOD, and not man. (Hos. 11. 9.) Be of good cheer therefore, comfort your self with the promises: you have cause to rejoice, seeing GOD hath wrought in you a dislike and a greif for your sins, which is a certain token that your sins shall never hurt you; for sins past cannot hurt us, if sins present do not like us. You are grown to an hatred and dislike of your sins, you mourn under the burden of them, therefore you are blessed. For blessed are they that mourn. Why therefore should you be so heavy and sad? Remember what *St. John* saith, If any man sin, we have an Advocate, *Jesus Christ* the righteous, and he is the reconciliation for our sins, (1 Joh. 2. 1.) *St. Paul* saith, that *Jesus Christ* is set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood. (Rom. 3. 2, 5.) Again the Holy Ghost saith, He is perfectly able to save all those that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for us. (Heb. 7. 25.) The Apostle saith, He is made of God for us; wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. (1 Cor. 1. 30.) Mark that he saith, All is for us, all is for his Church, for every member of his Church, and therefore for you: Christ is made of God righteousness, sanctification and redemption for you: Christ is your Mediator and your high Priest, and hath offered up the everlasting sacrifice, even for you, that he might pay your rancome, and redeem you from all iniquity. By his own blood hath he entered once into the holy place, and obtained eternal redemption for you. (Heb. 9. 12.) Christ is not entered into the Holy places which are made with hands, which are similitudes

tudes of the true Sanctuary, but is entred into the very Heaven, to appear now in the sight of God for you. *Heb. 9. 24.* The apostle saith, *He hath made him to be sin for you, that knew no sin, that you might be made the righteousness of God in him, (2 Cor. 5. 21.)* Christ was made a curse for you, that he might redeem you from the curse of the Law. (*Gal. 3. 13.*) Oh therefore how happy art thou that hast such a Mediator and high Priest! Rest therefore wholly upon him and upon that perfect, eternal, and propitiatory sacrifice which he hath once offered. Apply Christ, apply his merits, apply the promises to your self, and to your own conscience, so shall they do you good, and bring great comfort to your soul. For put case you had a most excellent and sovereign salve, which would cure any wound, if it were laid to; yet if you should lock it up in your chest, and never apply it to your wound, what good could it do you? Even so the righteousness and merits of Christ, are a spiritual Salve, which will cure any wound of the soul; but if we do not apply them to our souls by faith, they can do us no good. You must therefore apply Christ and all the promises of the Gospel, to your self by faith, and stand fully perswaded that whatsoever he hath done upon the cross, he hath done for you particularly: For what is justifying faith, but a full persuasion of God's particular love to us in Christ? the general and confused knowledge of Christ and his Gospel, avails not to eternal life. Labour therefore to have the true use of all these great and precious promises, and strike fast to Christ: for through him only we have remission of sins, and eternal Life, *To him all the Prophets give witness* (saith Saint Peter) *that through his Name all that believe shall receive remission of their sins. (Act. 10. 43.)* Where the Apostle tells us, that if a great Jury of Prophets were pannelled to testifie of the way and means to eternal Life, they would all with one consent, bring in a verdict, that remission of sins and eternal life, are only in Christ: Let us hear the fore-man speak, and one or two of the rest;

for in the mouth of two or three witnesses, shall every word stand, the Prophet *Esay* saith, *He was wounded for our transgressions, he was broken for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.* (*Isa. 53. 5.*) This great Prophet we see plainly affirms, that Christ suffered for our sins, and by his sufferings we are saved. The Prophet *Jeremy* testifies the same thing, saying, *Behold the day is come (saith the Lord) that I will raise to David a righteous branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute Justice and Judgment in the earth. In thy days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is the name whereby they shall call him, The Lord our righteousness.* (*Jer. 23. 5.*) This Prophet jumps with the other: For Christ (he saith) that is the righteous branch, and that he is our righteousness; which is all one, as if he had said, Our sins are pardoned only through him, and through him we are made righteous. Moreover he affirms, that *Judah* and *Israel*, that is, the Church shall be saved by him. The Prophet *Zachary*, that I may speak it with reverence, telleth the same tale, word for word. He avoucheth the same thing with the other two Prophets; for he saith, *In that day a fountain shall be opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness.* (*Zac. 13. 1.*) The meaning of the Prophet is, that in the days of Christ's Kingdom, the fountain of God's mercy in Christ, should be opened and let out, to wash away the sins and uncleanness of the Church. So then wee see that these three great witnesses do all agree in this, that through Christ only we are washed from our sins, and through him only we are made righteous: seeing then that Eternal Life is only in the Son, therefore he that hath the Son, hath Life. Be of good courage therefore, O *Asunetus*, for no doubt you have the Son, and therefore eternal life. Fear not your sins, for they cannot hurt you: For all the righteousness of *Abraham*! *Isaac* and *Jacob*, and all the most righteous men that ever lived on the face of the earth, if it were yours, could do you no good with-

our Christ: so all the sin in the world can do you no hurt being in Christ; *For there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus,* (Rom. 8. 1.) Pluck up a good heart therefore, be no more heavy and sad; for if you be found in Christ, cloathed with his perfect righteousness, (being made yours through faith) what can the Devil say to you? what can the Law do? They may well hiss at you, but they cannot sting you (Rom 8. 33, 34) they may grin at you, but they cannot hurt you. For who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's Elect? It is God that justifies, who shall condemn? It is Christ which is dead, or rather which is risen again; who also sitteth at the right hand of GOD, (Phil. 4. 4.) and makes request for us Rejoyce in the Lord therefore; again, I say, rejoyce. for greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. Our Lord Jesus is stronger than all. None can pluck you out of his hands: he is a strong Mediator; he hath conquered all our spiritual enemies: he hath overcome Hell, Death, and Damnation: he hath led captivity captive: (Col. 2. 15.) he hath spoiled principalities and powers, and hath made an open shew of them and triumphed over them on his Cross. He hath most triumphantly said, *O death, I will be thy death: O grave, I will be thy destruction.* (Hos. 13. 14.) *O death where, is thy sting? O Hell, where is thy victory?* (1 Cor. 15. 55.) Seeing then you have such a Mediator and high Priest, as hath conquered the hellish army, and subdued all infernal power, what need you to doubt? what need ye to fear any more? Moreover, you are to understand, and to be perswaded that God's mercy is exceeding great towards penitent sinners, and all such as mourn for their transgressions: according as he saith: *At what time soever a sinner doth repent him of his sins from the bottom of his heart, he will put them all out of his remembrance.* The Prophet David doth most lively and fully describe unto us, the merciful nature of God, in the 103 Psalm, where he saith, *The Lord is full of compassion and mercy, slow to anger, and of great kindness: he will not always chide, neither keepeth his*

anger for ever : he hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as high as the Heaven is above the Earth, so great is his mercy towards those that fear him. As far as is the East from the West, so far he hath removed our sins from us. As a Father hath compassion on his Children, so hath the Lord compassion on them that fear him. For he knows whereof we be made, he remembreth we are but dust. The History of the lost Son doth most notably set forth the wonderful mercy of God towards penitent sinners. There is shewed how the Lord doth embrace, tender, and make much of such poor sinners, as have broken and contrite hearts for their sins : (*Luk. 15. 20.*) for it is said, that when the Father saw his repenting Son a great way off, he had compassion on him, and ran and fell on his neck, and kissed him, and cloathed him with the best robe, put it on him, put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet, and caused the far calf to be killed for him. Even so the everlasting Father doth rejoyce at the conversion of any of his lost Sons. Yea, there is joy in the presence of the Angels of God for one sinner that is converted. Moreover, the Lord most lively expresseth his merciful nature and disposition in this ; That he is very loth we should perish, and willingly cast away our selves. Therefore often in the holy Scriptures he mourns for us, bewails our wretchedness, and takes up many pitiful complaints and lamentations for us, saying, *O that my people had hearkned unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways* (*Psal. 81. 13.*) And again, *O that thou hadst hearkned unto my Commandments ; then had thy prosperity been as the flood, and thy righteousness as the waters of the Sea.* (*Isa. 48. 18.*) Again, he mourningly complains by his Prophet *Hosea*. saying, *O Ephraim, what shall I do to thee ? O Judah, how shall I intreat thee ?* And in another place, *What could I do more to my Vineyard that I have not done ?* (*Isa. 5. 4.*) Mark here how compassionately the Almighty God doth yern over us, and even as it were bleed upon our wounds, The Apostle also notes the rich mercy

mercy and marvellous love of GOD to mankind in this, that he doth beseech us, and pray us by the Ministers of the Gospel, that we would be reconciled unto him. The words are these; *Now then are we Ambassadors for Christ; as though God did beseech you through us, we pray you in Christs stead, that you be reconciled unto God.* Is it not a strange thing that the omnipotent God should fall to entreating of us poor wretches? It is all one, as if a King should entreat a Begger, whom he may will and command. But the abundant mercy of God, towards mankind, doth most of all consist in this, that he hath given his only Son for us, when we were his enemies, as it is written, (John. 3. 14) *God so loved the world, that he hath given his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* Again, God sets out his love towards us, seeing that while we were yet sinners, Christ dyed for us, much more than being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. (Rom. 5. 10.) *For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.* In all this then we may clearly behold the infinite mercy of God towards us poor sinners. For is it not a great matter that the Son of God should take our nature upon him, (Phil. 2. 8.) should be so abased as he was, and should humble himself to death even to the death of the Cross? For as the shadow of the dial went back ten degrees, that Ezekeias might receive length of daies, and much happiness, so Christ the Son of Righteousness, hath gone back many degrees, that we might have Eternal Life. His Humiliation therefore is our Exaltation, his sufferings our joy, his death our Life. For we have no other remedy or refuge, but only his merits and righteousness. He is our City of refuge, whither we must fly, and where we must take sanctuary. (Jer. 46. 11.) He is the Balm of Gilead, whereby our souls are cured. He is that pool of Bethesda, where every man may be cured, of what disease soever he hath. (John

5. 2.) He is the River *Jordan*, where *Naaman* may wash away all his leprosie, (2 *King*. 5.) He is that *Pelican*, who by pecking a hole in his own breast, doth restore his young to life again by his blood. Yet one thing we must note by the way, which hath been partly touched before, That all the mercies of God, and merits of Christ are to be restrained only to the Elect, only to the true members of the Church, as plainly appeareth in *Psal.* 103. where the mercies of God, which are there largely described, are restrained only to them that fear him, keep his covenant, and think upon his Commandments to do them. And touching Christ, it is said, That he is a Prince and a Saviour unto *Israel*, (*Pf.* 130. 8.) and that he shall redeem *Israel* from all his iniquities. Again, it is written, that Christ being consecrated, was made the Author of eternal salvation, to them that obey him. (*Heb.* 5. 9.) None do or can obey him, but only the elect, therefore he is the Author of salvation only to the Elect. And consequently, the profane world, whatsoever they say, whatsoever they brag and boast, have no true title or interest in him. This thing was figured in the Law, in this, that the Mercy-seat, which was a type of God's mercy in Christ; (*Exod.* 25. 20) and the Ark which was a figure of the Church, were by the express Commandment of God, fitted each to other, both in length and breadth. For as the Ark was two Cubites and an half long, and a Cubit and an half broad, just so was the Mercy-seat. Noting thereby, that the Mercy of God in Christ should only be fitted to his Church, and belong only to the Church, so as not one without the Church should be saved. For he that hath not the Church for his Mother, cannot have God for his Father. Lastly, we are to observe, that as God is infinite in mercy, and of great compassion toward penitent sinners, so also is he most constant in the course of his mercies towards his Children, And therefore one of the *Psalms* carries this foot, *His mercy endureth for ever, his mercy endureth for ever, his mercy endureth for ever.* (*Psal.* 136).

Noting thereby both the constancy and eternity of God's mercy. To the same purpose it is thus witten, *It is the Lord's mercy that we are not consumed, it is because his compassions fail not.* (Lam. 3. 22.) Let us know therefore, that God, as touching his mercy to his Children, is of a most constant and unchangeable nature. As he saith, *I am the Lord, I change not.* For if God were of a changeable nature, as we are, and subject to passions, then were we in a most miserable case, then must he needs smite us down, and take vengeance of us every day, and every hour in the day, because we provoke him every day, and every hour in the day. But the God of Heaven is not as a man, that he should be subject to passions and affections; he is of a most constant and immutable nature. For though we provoke him every day with new sins, yet he is so far off from taking revenge, that the next day he rewardeth us with new mercies, and breaketh through all our unkindness to shew kindness to us; and through all our naughtiness to do us good. All our infirmities cannot make him break off with us, or cease to love us. He is content to take us with all faults, and to love us dearly though we have great faults. He regardeth not our infirmities, though we be oftentimes wayward and elvish, yet for all that he loveth us nevertheless. Even as a loving Mother, though her young suckling cry all the night, and be exceeding trease and wayward, so as she cannot rest an hour in the night; yea, though she endure much loathsomeness and trouble with it, yet in the morning when she riseth, she loveth it never the less, but dandleth with it, playeth with it, smileth and laugheth upon it. So the God of all mercies, whose love towards us far passeth the love of mothers, though we grieve him with our infirmities continually, yet loveth us nevertheless, and is content to put up all, to forget and forgive all; for he is a most constant lover. Where he once sets and settles his love, he loveth most constantly, nothing can alter him, nothing can remove him. Even

as a Father, when his little child catcheth a fall, breaketh his shins, and hurteth his face, is so far from being offended or displeased with him therefore, that he doth pity him, and bemoan him, seeking remedies for his hurt : So our merciful Father is so far off from being angry and displeased with us for some slips and falls, that he doth the more pity us, and lament our case. Even as a loving and wise Husband, although his wife have many infirmities, yet being assured she loves him dearly, and that her heart is with him, he is well content to wink at all her faults, and hide them, to bear with them ; yea, and to make nothing of them, loving her no whit the less for them. So our dear Husband and Spouse, Christ Jesus, because he knoweth we love him, and that he hath our hearts, is content to bear with all our infirmities, and to make light of them. For this cause it is, that he saith to his Spouse in the *Canticles*, though she was black, and full of infirmities, *Behold thou art all fair, my Love : Behold, thou art fair : thou art all fair, my Love, there is no spot in thee ; Cant. 4. 1, 7.* Mark, that he calleth the Church, fair, all fair, and without spot ; not because she was so in her self, but because she was made so in him : and assuredly the eternal God, beholding her in his Son, doth so esteem and account of her. For as he that beholdeth any thing through a red glass, doth take it to be red, as is the colour of the Glass, so God the Father beholding us in his Son, doth take us to be of the same nature and quality that he is, that is perfectly righteous. For this cause it is, that he loveth us, and setteth his heart upon us, and will not be removed from us. For his love to his children is alwaies one and the same, although we have not alwaies the like sight and feeling of it : as the Moon is always the same in substance and quantity though sometimes it seemeth to us to be wasted into a very small scantling. Let us know then, to our great comfort, that the love of God toward us in his dear Son, is constant, and alwaies alike ; and that he will not discountenance us, or shake us off
for

for some infirmities, no nor yet for many infirmities : For the merciful God doth accept of his children, because their general care is good, and the universal renown of their life tendeth unto righteousness ; howsoever they may greatly fail in many particular actions. Two or three fits of an ague doth not prove a diseased body ; nor two or three good days a sound body : even so some few infirmities do not argue a wicked man : nor two or three good actions a good man : but we must have an eye to the certain and settled course of a man's life : even as men are truly said to walk in a way, when they go on in it, although sometimes they trip and stumble : So God's Children do walk in the way of righteousness, although they sometimes stumble and step out of it, or sometimes be violently haled out of it by Thieves. For Satan and the violence of our lusts, do often hale us out of the way ; but we must get into it again as soon as we are escaped. Now then to conclude and draw to an end : Sith God is so infinitely merciful, and constant in his mercy : sith such great and precious promises are made to us in Christ : sith the Lord doth not regard our infirmities when our hearts are with him : therefore, O *Asunetus*, be of good cheer, let nothing trouble you ; fear not the assaults of the Devil, regard not his temptations, for assuredly your sins are forgiven. Christ is yours ; Heaven is yours ; and all the promises of life and salvation belong unto you. So as you need not doubt, you cannot miscarry : your name is written in the Book of Life.

Asun. I am greatly comforted and cheared up with your words. Your preaching of the Gospel, and laying open of God's abundant mercy in Christ, and of the Promises, do exceedingly revive me, and even as it were, put new life into me : they are as Sack and Sugar, unto my soul, and sweeter than the honey and the honey-comb : They are as Physick to my sick soul, and as ointment to my spiritual wounds. I do now begin to see what misery is in man, and what mercy is in God. And I know by woful experience, that where misery is not felt, there mercy is not regarded :

regarded : but now it hath pleased God to give me some feeling of my own wretchedness and misery, and yet with good comfort in his mercy. For I thank God for it, I begin now to grow to some perswasion, that the promises do belong unto me, my sins are forgiven, and that I am one of them that shall be saved.

Theol. I do greatly rejoyce, that God hath, according to his rich mercy, wrought this good work in you. I do from the bottom of my heart, give him the praise and glory of it. Happy are you, that ever you were born, in whom the Lord hath wrought so gracious a work. It is his high favour and special mercy towards you: for it is the only priviledge and prerogative royal of God's Children, truly to repent and believe. I beseech God therefore to increase your faith, and to fill you full of joy and peace in believing that you may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost.

Antil. The Sun draws low : Asunetus, it is time for you and me to be going.

Phil. Indeed the night will approach by and by, and therefore we must of necessity break off.

Theol. Sith it is so, we will here surcease and go no further.

Asun. Sir, I will now take my leave of you : I can never be thankful enough for all the good instructions and comforts which I have heard from you this day : I hope I shall remember some of them whilst I live. I do therefore praise God for you, and for your counsel, and for this day, which I hope shall be the first day of my repentance, and true conversion unto God.

Theol. The Lord, for his infinite mercy sake, grant it. ; And I must humbly beseech the Almighty God to establish you with his free Spirit, that you may proceed and go forward in a Christian course unto the the end.

Phil. I pray you, good Master Theologus, pardon my boldness, for you see I have been very bold to propound many questions unto you, wherein you have fully satisfied me, to the great joy and comfort of my soul, I do therefore
praise

praise God for you, and I hope I shall never forget some things you have uttered. But I will now commend you to God, and to the Word of his Grace, which is able to build us further.

Theol. Farewel good *Philagathus*. The Lord bless you and keep you in all your waies; and the God of Heaven preserve us all, and continue us in his fear unto the end.

All Glory be given to God.

A

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F I N I S.

A Morning Prayer, to be used in private FAMILIES.

O Lord our God, and Heavenly Father, we thy unworthy children do here come into thy most holy and heavenly presence, to give thee praise and glory, for all thy great mercies and manifold blessings towards us, especially for that thou hast preserved us this night past, from all the dangers and fears thereof, hast given us quiet rest to our bodies, and brought us now safely to the beginning of this day; and doth now afresh renew all thy mercies upon us, as the Eagle reneweth her Bill; giving us all things abundantly to enjoy; as food, rayment, health, peace, liberty, and freedom from many miseries, diseases, casualties, and calamities which we are subject to in this life every minute of an hour: and not only so, but also for vouchsafing unto us many good things, not only for necessity but even for delight also. But above all (dear Father) we praise thy name for thy blessing of a better life, especially for thy most holy Word and Sacraments, and all the good we enjoy thereby; for the continuance of the Gospel amongst us, for the death of thy Son, and all that happiness which we have thereby; also because thou hast chosen us to life before we were, and that of thy meer goodness and undeserved favour towards us; and hast called us in thine appointed time, justified us by thy grace, and sanctified us by thy Spirit, and adopted us to be thine own children, and Heirs apparent to the great Crown. O Lord open our eyes every day more and more, to see & consider of thy great and marvellous love to us in all these things; that by the due consideration thereof, our hearts may be drawn yet nearer unto thee, even more to love thee, fear thee and obey thee; that as thou art enlarged towards us, in mercy, so we may be enlarged towards thee in thanksgiving, and as thou dost abound towards us in goodness, so we may abound towards thee in obedience and love. And sith (dear Father) thou art never weary of doing us good, notwithstanding all our unworthiness,

Morning Prayer.

ness and naughtiness, therefore let the consideration of thy great mercy and fatherly kindness towards us, even as it were force our hearts, and compell us to come into thy most glorious presence, with new songs of thanksgiving in our mouths. We pray thee (O most merciful God) to forgive all our unthankfulness, unkindness, profaneness, and great abusing of all thy mercies, and especially our abuse and contempt of thy Gospel, together with all other the sins of our life, which we confess are innumerable, and more than can be reckoned up, both in omission of good things, and commission of evil: We most humbly intreat thee to set them all over to the reckoning which thy Son hath made up for them upon his Cross, and never to lay any of them to our charge, but freely forget all, and forgive all. Nail down all our sins and iniquities to the Cross of Christ, bury them in his death, bathe them in his blood, hide them in his wounds, let them never rise up in judgement against us. Set us free of the miseries that are upon us for sin, and keep back the judgments to come, both of soul, body, goods, and good name. Be reconciled to us in thy dear Son concerning all matters past; not once remembring or repeating to us our old and abominable iniquities, but accept us as righteous in him, imputing his righteousness unto us, and our sins unto him. Let his righteousness satisfy thy Justice for all our unrighteousness, his obedience for our disobedience, his perfection for our imperfection. Moreover, we humbly beseech thy good Majesty to give us the true sight and feeling of our manifold sins, that we may not be blinded in them through delight, or hardned in them through custom, as the reprobates are; but that we may be even weary of them, and much grieved for them, labouring and striving by all possible means to get out of them. Good Father touch our hearts with true repentance for all sin. Let not us take any delight or pleasure in any sin; but howsoever we fall through frailty (as we fall often) let us never fall finally, let us never lye down in sin, nor continue in sin; but let us get upon our feet again, and turn

Morning Prayer.

to thee with all our hearts, and seek thee while thou mayest be found, and whilest thou dost offer grace and mercy unto us. O Lord increase in us that true and lively faith, whereby we may lay sure hold on thy Son Christ, and rest upon his merits altogether. Give us faith, assuredly to believe all thy great and precious promises made in the Gospel, and strengthen us from above to walk and abound in all the true and sound fruits of faith. Let us walk, not after the flesh, but after the spirit. Let us feel the power of thy Sons death killing sin in our mortal bodies, and the power of his resurrection, raising us up to newness of life. Let us grow daily in the sanctification of the spirit, and the mortification of the flesh. Let us live holily, justly, and soberly in this present evil world, shewing forth the virtues of thee, in all our particular actions, that we may adorn our most holy profession, and shine as lights in the midst of a crooked and froward generation amongst whom we live, being gainful to all by our lives and conversations, and offensive to none. To this end we pray thee fill us with thy Spirit, and all spiritual graces; as love, wisdom, patience, contentment, meekness, humility, temperance, chastity, kindness, and affability; and stir us up to use prayer and watchfulness, reading and meditation in thy Law, and all other good means, whereby we may grow and abound in all heavenly virtues. Bless us in the use of the means from day to day: make us such as thou wouldst have us to be, and such as we desire to be: work in us both will and deed, purpose and power: For thou, O Lord, art all in all, thou wilt have mercy upon whom thou wilt have mercy, and whom thou wilt, thou hardenest. Have mercy upon us therefore, (dear Father) and never leave us to our selves, nor to our own wills, lusts and desires, but assist us with thy good Spirit, that we may continue to the end in a righteous course; that so at length we may be received into glory, and be partakers of that immortal Crown which thou hast laid up for all that love thee, and truly call upon thee.

Further,

Morning Prayer.

Further, we intreat thee, O heavenly Father, to give us all things necessary for this life ; as food, raiment, health, peace, liberty, and such freedom from those manifold miseries which we lye open unto every day, as thou seeest meet. Bless unto us all the means which thou hast put into our hands for the sustenance of this frail life. Bless our stock and store, corn and cattel, trades and occupations ; and all works of our hands: for thy blessing only makes rich, and it bringeth no sorrows with it. Give us therefore such a competency and sufficiency of these outward blessings, as thou in thy heavenly wisdom seeest most needful for us. Moreover we humbly beseech thee (most loving Father) in great mercy look down from heaven upon thy whole church and every member of it. Be favourable unto *Sion*, and build up the walls of *Jerusalem*. Behold with the eye of pity, the great ruines and desolations of thy Church. Heal up the wounds, and make up the breaches thereof in all Nations. Regard it as thine own flock ; tender it as thine own family ; dress it as thine own vineyard ; and love it as thine own Spouse. Think thoughts of peace to it, and alwaies look upon it in deep compassion. Bless it with thy grace, guide it with thy Spirit, and defend it still by thy mighty power : Scatter the devises, confound the counsels, and overthrow the forces of all that fight against it. Specially we entreat thee dear Father, to set thy self against that Antichrist of *Rome*, that man of perdition, which setteth himself against thee, and against all thy people. In thine appointed time we pray thee give him a deadly downfal. Beat down all his power and authority dayly more and more ; give free passage to thy Gospel in all Kingdoms that *Babylon* may fall, and never rise up again. The more the favourites and adherents of *Rome* labour to uphold their Idolatrous Kingdom, the more let it fall down : even as *Dagon* before the presence of thine Ark. Pour down the Vials of the fulness of thy wrath upon the Kingdoms of the Beast ; and let their Riches ; wealth, credit, and authority, dry up every day more and more ; as the River *Euphrates*. Let it pity thee, O

Morning Prayer.

Father, to see thine own Spouse sit as a deformed and forlorn woman here below; weeping and mourning with her hair about her neck; having lost all her beauty and comeliness. Chear her up (dear Father) glad her with the joy of thy countenance, and so deck her and trim her up, that thou mayest delight in her as a Bridegroom in his Bride. Specially we entreat thee have mercy upon thy Church in this land: intend good unto us and not evil. Give us not over into the hands of our cruel enemies, as our sins have deserved. Scatter we pray thee O Lord, the devises, and break the plots of all such as have plotted the overthrow and utter subversion of this Church and Commonwealth: Bless this Church more and more with the continuance of true Religion amongst us, for thy great Names sake, and infinite mercies sake; deal graciously and favourably with us and our posterity. Turn from us that vengeance which is due unto us for our sins. For thou seest how iniquity prevaieth, and the wicked go away with the goal. Atheism overspreadeth every where, and Popery seemeth to get a head again. Now therefore (dear Father) we most humbly beseech thee to take order speedily for the remedying and repressing of these manifold disorders and grievous enormities that are amongst us. Be entreated of thy poor children to be good to this *English* Nation. Hear the cries of thine Elect; hear the mourning of them that mourn in *Sion*. Let the cryes of thy children cry down all the cryes of the sins of the Land, and be reconciled unto us in the multitude of thy compassions, that so thou may'st still continue a most merciful Protector of this thine *English* Vineyard. We pray thee (good Father) shew special mercies to our Governours: Bless and keep them all in their wayes; bless their Government unto us. Let thine Angels encamp about them, and let thy holy hand be alwaies over them: keep them from treasons, and deliver them from the treacheries of their enemies: give them to see what belongs to their Peace, and give them a heart earnestly bent to set upon the practice of the same: bless all our Counsellours, and give such success unto all

Morning Prayer.

their counsels and policies in matters of State, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. Bless all the Nobility, work in them a care to glorifie thy Name in their places : make them faithful to thee, and faithful to the Land. Direct with thy good Spirit all, such as bear the Sword of Justice, that they may draw it out to punish the wicked, and to defend the godly; and that they may with all good care and conscience discharge the duties of their places. Increase the number of faithful and zealous Ministers in this Church. Send thy Gospel to those places where it is not, and bless it where it is. Remember them in thy mercy (O Lord) that are under any cross or affliction whatsoever : be comfortable unto them, heal up their wounds, bind up their sores, put all their tears into thy bottle, and make their bed in all their sorrows, and put such a good end to all their troubles, that they may redound to thy glory, & the furtherance of their own salvation. In the mean time give them patience and constancy, to bear whatsoever it shall please thy merciful hand to lay upon them. Last of all (in a word) we pray thee bless the Magistracy, Ministry, and Commonalty. Bless all thy people, do good to all that are true and upright in their hearts. And so (dear Father) we do commit and commend our selves, our souls and bodies into thy hands, for this day and the rest of our life, praying thee to take care and charge of us. Keep us from all evil, watch over us for our good, let thine Angels encamp about us, let thy holy hand be over us, and keep us in all our waies, that we may live to thy praise and glory here on earth, keeping faith and a good conscience in all our actions ; that after this life we may be crowned of thee for ever in thy Kingdom. Grant these things (good Father) to us here present, and to all thine absent, praying thee in special favour to remember all our friends and kinsfolks in the flesh, all our good Neighbours and well-willers, and all those for whom we are bound to pray, by nature, by deserts, or any duty whatsoever, for Jesus Christs sake our alone Mediator : To whom with thee and the Holy Ghost, be given all praise and glory, both now and for evermore. Amen.

An Evening Prayer to be used in private FAMILIES.

O Eternal God, and most loving and dear Father, we thy unworthy children do here fall down at the foot of thy great Majesty, acknowledging from our hearts, that We are altogether unworthy to come near thee; or to look towards thee, because thou art a God of infinite glory, and we are most vile and abominable sinners, such as were conceived and born in sin and corruption, and such as have inherited our Fathers corruption, and also have actually transgressed all thy holy Statutes and Laws, both in thoughts, words and deeds, before we knew thee and since, secretly and openly, with our selves and with others: our particular sins are more than can be numbered; for who knoweth how often he offendeth? But this we must needs confess against our selves, that our hearts are full of pride, covetousness, and the love of this world, full of wrath, anger, and impatience; full of lying, dissembling and deceivings; full of vanity, hardness, and profaness; full of infidelity, distrust and self-love; full of lust, uncleanness, and all abominable desires: yea, our hearts are the very sinks of sin, and dunghills of all filthiness. And besides all this; we do omit the good things we should do; for there are in us great wants of faith, of love, of zeal, of patience, of contentment, and of every good grace; so as thou hast just cause to proceed to sentence of judgment against us as most damnable transgressors of all thy holy Commandments; yea, such as sunk in our rebellions, and have many times and often committed high treason against thy Majesty; and therefore thou mayest justly cast us all down into hell-fire, there to be tormented with satan and his angels for ever. And we have nothing to except against thy Majesty for so doing, sith therein thou shouldest deal with us but according to equity, and our deserts. Wherefore (dear Father) we do appeal from thy justice to thy mercy, most humbly intreating thee to have mercy upon us, and freely to forgive us all our sins past whatsoever; both new and old, secret and open, known and unknown; and that

Evening Prayer.

for Jesus Christ sake our alone Mediator. And we pray thee touch our hearts with true grief and unfeigned repentance for them, that they may be a continual sorrow and heart-smart unto us ; so as nothing may grieve us more than this, that we have offended thee, being our special friend and Father : Give us therefore (dear Father) every day more and more sight and feeling of our sins, with true humiliation under the same. Give us also that true and lively Faith, whereby we may lay sure hold on thy Son Christ and all his merits, applying the same to our own souls, so as we may stand fully perswaded, that whatsoever he hath done upon the cross, he hath done for us particularly, as well as for others. Give us faith (good Father) constantly to believe all the sweet promises of the Gospel, touching remission of sin, and eternal life, made in thy Son Christ, O Lord, increase our faith that we may altogether rest upon thy promises, which are *Tea* and *Amen*. *Tea*, that we may settle our selves and all that we have wholly upon them ; both our souls, bodies, goods, names, wives, children, and our whole estate : knowing that all things depend upon thy promises, power and providence, and that thy word doth support and bear up the whole order of Nature. Moreover, we entreat thee (O Lord) to strengthen us from above, to walk in every good way ; and to bring forth the fruits of true faith in all our particular actions, studying to please thee in all things, and to be fruitful in good works ; that we may shew forth unto all men by our good conversation, whose children we are : and that we may adorn and beautifie our most holy profession, by walking in a Christian course, and in all the sound fruit and practise of godliness and true Religion. To this end we pray thee sanctifie our hearts by thy Spirit yet more and more ; sanctifie our souls and bodies and all our corrupt natural faculties, as reason, understanding, will and affections, so as they may be fitted for thy worship and service, taking a delight and pleasure therein. Stir us up to use prayer, watchfulness, reading, meditation in thy Law, and all other good means, whereby we may profit in grace and goodness from day to day. Bless us in the use of the means, that we may daily die

Evening Prayer.

to sin, and live to righteousness: draw us yet nearer unto thee, help us against our manifold wants. Amend our great imperfections; renew us inwardly more and more, repair the ruines of our hearts: Aid us against the remnants of sin. Enlarge our hearts to run the way of thy Commandments, direct all our steps in thy Word, let none iniquity have dominion over us. Assist us against our special infirmities and master-sins, that we may get the victory over them all, to thy glory, and the great peace and comfort of our own consciences. Strengthen us (good Father) by thy grace and holy Spirit, against the common corruptions of the world; as pride, whoredom, covetousness, contempt of the Gospel; swearing, lying, dissembling and deceiving. O dear Father, let us not be overcome of these filthy vices; nor any other sinful pleasures and fond delights, wherewith thousands are carried headlong to destruction. Arm our souls against all the temptations of this world, the Flesh and the Devil, that we may overcome them all through thy help, and keep on the right way to life, that we may live in thy fear, and dye in thy favour; that our last daies may be our best days; and that we may end in great peace of conscience.

Furthermore (dear Father) we intreat thee not only for our selves, but for all our good Brethren, thy dear children, scattered over the face of the whole Earth, most humbly beseeching thee to bless them all; to chear them up, and glad them with the joy of thy countenance, both now and alwaies. Guide them all in thy fear, and keep them from evil, that they may praise thy name. In these dangerous daies, and declining times, we pray thee (O Lord) raise up nursing Fathers, and nursing Mothers unto thy Church. Raise up also faithful Pastors, that thy Cause may be carried forward, truth may prevail, Religion may prosper; thy name only may be set up in the Earth; thy Sons Kingdom advanced; and thy will accomplished. Set thy self against all adversary power, specially that of Rome, Antichrist, Idolatry, and Atheism; curse and cross all their council, frustrate their devices, scatter their Forces, overthrow their Armies. When they are most wise, let them be most foolish; when they are most strong, let them be most weak. Let them know that

Evening Prayer.

there is no wisdom nor counsel, power nor policy against thee the Lord of Hosts. Let them know that Israel hath a God, and that thou which art called Jehovah, art the only Ruler over all the world. Arise therefore (O most mighty God) and maintain thine own cause against all thine enemies, smite through all their loins, and bow down their backs; yea, let them all be confounded, and turned backward that bear ill will unto Zion. Let the patient abiding of the Righteous be joy, and let the wicked be disappointed of their hope. But of all favour, we intreat thee (O Lord) to shew special mercy to thy Church in this Land wherein we live. Continue thy Gospel among us yet with greater success; purge thy house daily more and more, take away all things that offend. Let this Nation still be a place where thy name may be called upon, and an harbour for thy Saints. Shew mercy to our posterity (dear Father) and have care of them, that thy Gospel may be left unto them as a most holy inheritance. Defend us against foreign Invasion, keep out Idolatry and Popery from amongst us. Turn from us those plagues which our sins cry for, for the sins of this Land are exceeding great, horrible and outrageous; and give thee just cause to make us spectacles of thy vengeance to all Nations; that by how much the more thou hast lifted us up in great mercy and long peace; by so much more thou shouldst press us down in great wrath and long War. Therefore (dear Father) we most humbly intreat thee, for thy great Names sake, and for thy infinite mercies sake that thou wouldest be reconciled to this Land, and discharge it of all the horrible sins thereof. Drown them (O Lord) in thy infinite mercy, through Christ, as it were in a bottomless Gulph: that they may never rise up in judgment against us. For though our sins be exceeding many and fearful, yet thy mercy is far greater. For thou art infinite in mercy, but we cannot be infinite in sinning: Give us not over into the hands of the Idolaters, lest they should blaspheme thy Name, and say, where is their God in whom they trusted? But rather, dear Father, take us in thine own hands, and correct us according to thy wisdom, for with thee is mercy and deep compassion. Moreover, we most heartily be-

Evening Prayer.

beseech thy good Majesty to bless all that are in authority over us, counsel them from above, let them take advice of thee in all things, that they may both consult and resolve of such courses as may be most for thy glory, the good of the Church, and peace of this our Commonwealth. Bless the Nobility, and all the Magistrates of the Land, giving them all Grace to execute Judgment and Justice, and to maintain truth and equity. Bless all the faithful Ministers of the Gospel, increase the number of them, increase the gifts in them, and so bless all their labours in their several places and Congregations, that they all may be instruments of thy hand to enlarge thy Sons Kingdom, and to win many unto thee. Comfort the comfortless with all needful comforts. Forget none of thine that are in trouble, but as their afflictions are, so let the joys and comfort of thy Spirit be unto them, and so sanctifie unto all thine their afflictions and troubles, that they may tend to thy glory and their own good. Give us thankful hearts for all thy mercies both spiritual and corporal, for thou art very merciful unto us in the things of this life, and infinitely more merciful in the things of a better life. Let us deeply ponder and weigh all thy particular favours towards us, that by the due consideration thereof, our hearts may be gained yet neerer unto thee and that therefore we may both love and obey thee, because thou art so kind and loving unto us, that even thy love toward us may draw our loves towards thee, and that because mercy is with thee, thou mayest be feared. Grant these things (good Father) and all other needful Graces for our souls or bodies, or any of thine throughout the whole world, for Jesus Christ's sake: in whose name we further call upon thee, as he hath taught us in his Gospel, saying:

Our Father which art in Heaven, &c.

A Prayer to be used at any time, by one alone privately.

O Lord my God and Heavenly Father, I thy most unworthy child do here in thy sight freely confess that I am a most sinful creature ; and damnable transgressour of all thy holy Laws and Commandments : that as I was born and bred in sin, and stained in the womb, so have I continually brought forth the corrupt and ugly fruits of that infection and contagion where-in I was first conceived, both in thoughts, words and works : If I should go about to reckon up my particular offences, I know not where to begin, or where to make an end, For they are more than the hairs of my head ; yea, far more than I can possibly feel or know. For who knoweth the heighth and depth of his corruption ? who knoweth how oft he offendeth ? Thou only , O Lord, knowest my sins, who knowest my heart ; nothing is hid from thee, thou knowest what I have been, and what I am, yea, my conscience doth accuse me of many and grievous evils, and I do dayly feel by woful experience how frail I am, how prone to evil, and how untoward unto all goodness. My mind is of vanity, my heart full of profaneness, mine affections full of deadness, dulness, drowsiness in matters of thy worship and service : Yea, my whole soul is full of spiritual blindness, hardness, unprofitableness, coldness and security. And in very deed, I am altogether a lump of sin, and a mass of all misery, and therefore I have forfeited thy favour, incurred thy high displeasure , and have given thee just cause to frown upon me, to give me over, and leave me to mine own corrupt will and affections. But (O my dear Father) I have learned from thy mouth, that thou art a God full of mercy, slow to wrath, of great compassion and kindness toward all such as groan under the burthen of their sins. Therefore extend thy great mercy to-wards

A Private Prayer.

wards me poor sinner, and give me a general pardon for all mine offences whatsoever : seal it in the blood of thy Son, and seal it to my conscience by thy spirit, assuring me more and more of thy love and favour towards me, and that thou art a reconciled Father unto me. Grant that I may all the time to come love thee much, because much is given, and of very love fear thee, and obey thee. O Lord, increase my faith, that I may stedfastly believe all the promises of the Gospel made in thy Son Christ, and rest upon them altogether. Enable me to bring forth the sound fruits of faith and repentance in all my particular actions. Fill my soul full of joy and peace in believing. Fill me full of inward comfort, and spiritual strength against all temptations : give me yet a greater feeling of thy love, and manifold mercies toward me ; work in my soul a love of thy Majesty, a zeal of thy Glory, and hatred of all evil, and a desire of all good things. Give me victory over those sins, which thou knowest are strongest in me. Let me once at last make a conquest of the world and the flesh. Mortifie in me whatsoever is carnal : sanctifie me throughout by thy Spirit : knit my heart to thee for ever, that I may fear thy name : renew in me the image of thy Son Christ, daily more and more. Give me a delight in the reading and meditating of thy word. Let me rejoyce in the publick Ministry thereof. Let me love and reverence all the faithful Ministers of the Gospel. Sanctifie their doctrines to my conscience, seal them in my soul, write them in my heart, give me a soft and melting heart, that I may tremble at thy words, and be alwayes much affected with godly Sermons. Let not my sins hold back thy mercies from me, nor mine unworthiness stop the passage of thy Grace. Open mine eyes to see the great wonders of thy Law. Reveal thy secrets unto me ; be open-hearted toward me thy unworthy servant. Hide nothing from me, that may make for thy glory, and the good of my soul. Bless all means unto me which thou usest for my good. Bless all holy instructions unto my soul.

Bless

A Private Prayer.

Bless me at all times, both in hearing and reading of thy Word. Give me the right use of all thy mercies and corrections, that I may be the better for them. Let me abound in love to thy children. Let my heart be very nearly knit unto them, that where thou lovest most, there I may love most also. Let me watch and pray that I enter not into temptation; give me patience and contentment in all things. Let me love thee more and more, and the world less and less. So draw my mind upward, that I may despise all transitory things. Let me be so wrapt and ravished with the sight and feeling of heavenly things, that I may make a base reckoning of all earthly things. Let me use this world as though I used it not. Let me use it but for necessity, as meat and drink. Let me not be carried away with the vain pleasures and fond delights thereof. Good Father work the good work in me, and never leave me nor forsake me; till thou hast brought me to true happiness. Oh dear father, make me faithful in my calling, that I may serve thee in it, and be alwaies careful to do what good I may in any thing. Bless me in my outward estate. Bless my soul, body, goods, and name. Bless all that belong unto me. Bless my goings out, and comings in. Let thy countenance be lifted up upon me, now and always, cheer me up with the joys and comforts of thy spirit, make me thankful for all thy mercies. For I must needs confess that thou art very kind to me in all things. For in thee I live, move, and have my being; of thee I have my welfare and good being; thou art a daily friend, and special good benefactor unto me. I live at thy cost and charges, I hold all of thee in chief, and I find that thou art never weary of doing me good, thy goodness towards me is unchangeable. Oh, I can never be thankful enough unto thee for all thy mercies both spiritual and corporal. But in such measure as I am able, I praise thy Name for all, beseeching thee to accept of my thanksgiving in thy Son Christ; and to give me a profitable use of all thy favours, that thereby my heart may be fully drawn unto thee. Give

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A Private Prayer.

me, O Father, to be of such a good nature and disposition, that I may be won by gentleness, and fair means, as much as if thou gavest me many lashes. Pardon all mine unthankfulness, unkindness, and great abusing of thy mercies, and give me grace to use them more to thy glory in all time to come. Strengthen me, dear Father, thus to continue praising and glorifying thy Name here upon earth, that after this life I may be crowned of thee for ever in thy Kingdom. Grant these Petitions, most merciful God, not only to me, but to all thy dear children throughout the whole world, for Jesus Christ's sake: in whose name I do further call upon thee, saying, as he hath taught me. *Our Father which art in Heaven, &c.*

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